



THE
LOST INHERITANCE.
A NOVEL.

Life is real ! Life is earnest !
And the grave is not its goal ;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle !
Be a hero in the strife !

LONGFELLOW.

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THE LOST INHERITANCE.

CHAPTER I.

Who does the best his circumstance allows,
Does well, acts nobly, angels could no more.

YOUNG.

The miserable have no other medicine,
But only hope . . .
Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful.

SHAKSPEARE.

ARTHUR was successful in having the interview he sought with Mr. Harcourt, who, although he did not seem inclined to use any very decided means to oppose his daughter's maintaining her engagement, still considered it most

imprudent and unnecessary. Stanley perceived that it was his indolence and apathy, far more than his sanction, which prevented him expressing his opinion in stronger terms ; all, therefore, that could be expected from him was a kind of armed neutrality, but avoiding more decided opposition was a great point gained : anything would be better for Marion than strong discussions or moral coercion.

After she had parted with Arthur, she endeavoured to think calmly over what had passed, to realize the truth of his position : the more she considered it, the more determined she was that he should have all the alleviation and consolation which tenderness and affection could afford. Her love seemed deeper and stronger, now that it had been overshadowed by sorrow ; for it was not a mere excitement of the fancy, or a violent yet misguided passion, but a pure and holy power which would influence her for ever, and would outlive all obstacles.

It was painful to her ardent and enthu-

siastic temperament that she could not be of any use to Arthur in his difficulties ; that she could not act, but must confine herself to woman's most often appointed field — to bear and suffer in silence and alone. In silence ! What a powerful thing that same silence is ! To be still and quiet when the soul is passing through the sea of grief ; to restrain all vain repinings and useless complaints, requires a strong effort of the mental energies : and how great are the results of this patient possession of the spirit !

Marion began to get anxious to see her mother, that she might tell her of the change in her prospects, and have the dread of the interview over ; but she was not likely to be at home for some time. She could not occupy herself with any of her usual pursuits, for she was completely unnerved and unsettled ; the pencil was so unsteady in her trembling hand, that she abandoned the easel in despair ; her attention wandered from her book, she closed it

with a sigh ; the half-finished letter on her desk, begun with such different feelings, made her wretched : she destroyed it, and thought her hopes and plans had vanished as suddenly. The only resource was some work, “ woman’s excuse for thinking,” as one of our most eloquent writers has defined it ; while her fingers plied their task unconsciously, her thoughts were busy with the past and with the future.

At last, she heard the carriage-wheels stop at the door ; the well-known knock echoed through the house. Marion’s heart throbbed with painful rapidity, as it always did when she was agitated—for with all her apparent resolution and calmness, she was a sad coward in reality.

Mrs. Harcourt soon appeared, and from her countenance, Marion guessed that the communication she had to make would not convey any news ; however, as her mother did not seem inclined to lead to the subject, she said :

“ Arthur has been here this morning ; he returns to Langston to-morrow on business, so that he will not call again. He is looking wretchedly ill.”

“ So your father told me, when I met him just now. Mr. Stanley had not left him long ; he had been telling him about this unlucky misfortune of the bank. Poor fellow ! it is a sad thing for him. I suppose he has told you about it ?”

“ Certainly ; he came to town for that purpose. He has suffered dreadfully in consequence.”

“ I am very sorry for him, and also for you, my dear ; for, of course, your engagement cannot continue : it would be worse than folly ; for what chance is there of his being able to fulfil it ?”

“ This is what he came here to tell me ; for, with his honour and generosity, he could not bear to bind me to him, under these unforeseen circumstances.”

“Quite right of him, and exactly what I should have expected him to do; for he is not one of those foolish young men who think everything must give way before their love. He must see the imprudence of any ties now. He did not mention to your father having released you from your promise. I suppose he considered it a matter of course.”

“On the contrary, he could not tell my father any such thing, because it would not have been correct.”

“What do you mean? I thought he had felt the impossibility of continuing his engagement; you said so just now.”

“So I did. He resigned his claims to me—resigned his hopes—in consequence of the change in his prospects; but I was not willing to be resigned for such reasons; therefore, we have not broken our faith to each other.”

“Most absurd romantic folly! I suppose

this is your doing—he has more sense. I wonder, Marion, with all your ideas of reserve and propriety, that you could press your love on one who rejected it!”

A bright flush mantled Marion’s cheek at this taunt, and she replied, coldly :

“ It was not a question of offering Arthur my affection ; for that, he well knew was already his.”

“ If he thought it necessary to break off the engagement, I do not think you were the one to prolong it. It is only postponing the evil day, for you cannot go on in this way.”

“ May I ask, whether you know all the particulars of this change in Arthur’s position?—that he has sacrificed everything from a feeling of high honour?”

“ Yes, I know all that. He seems to have acted nobly ; but, as he has chosen his course, he must abide by its consequences. He cannot have the satisfaction of

beggaring himself to gratify his ideas of honour, and yet suffer nothing from the sacrifice."

"You would not talk of his suffering nothing, if you had seen him this morning," answered Marion, remembering his agitation. "When he determined to meet the demands of the directors, he considered that it involved the breaking off of our engagement, and yet he did not hesitate."

"In fact, he preferred his honour to his love: some women might resent that."

"I should not have thought him worthy of my affection, had he acted differently; but I see no reason why his generous conduct should change my feelings."

"Do you not see that he cannot afford to marry, and will not be able for years? for although he is rising at the bar, yet, without any private fortune, that is but a poor subsistence for a long time."

"But we can wait—there is no hurry about

marrying ; we are neither of us so old, that the delay of a few years need be such a great consideration."

" You know what a dislike both your father and I have to long engagements, and yours will be interminable. I thought you always disapproved of them also."

" I do on principle ; but there are exceptions to all rules, and this is one."

" I fancied you would have been more sensible than to persist in this engagement, when you see its imprudence ; you are acting quite contrary to our wishes."

" I am extremely sorry, but I could not think of changing now that Arthur is unfortunate. I love him, and nothing can alter my feelings ; he has proved himself most worthy of my affection, and he may rely upon it being always his."

" Marion, this is nonsense ; you must give it up, I cannot consent to your persisting

in this engagement under the present circumstances."

"You gave a willing sanction to Arthur's proposals, I accepted them, and we have learnt to love each other more than anything else in this world. It is worse than useless to talk of forgetting this; his character is unchanged, you can have no objection to him personally; it is loss of fortune alone which makes you oppose him. But that is no reason to me for giving him up, but rather an additional one for being true to him; he shall not suffer on my account from his generosity."

"Really, Marion, you are quite eloquent on the subject; I had no idea you were so romantic; but this will soon evaporate, and you will listen to reason."

"If you call the deepest feelings romantic, your appellation may be correct; but if you imagine they will disappear, you little understand me. Nothing will change my attachment

to Arthur, for I believe him to be all I could desire."

"That is always the story when people are in love. You will soon see the folly and imprudence of this affair, and will agree with my views of it."

"Never, for you are only looking at its worldly side, its worldly advantages and disadvantages; but I know that our engagement includes far more. Besides, you seem to think it is as easy to cast away one's affection as to throw aside a glove, that love is to be forgotten in an instant; but I feel quite differently. If I never saw Arthur again, I shall always think of him as I now do; I have that faith in him, which will enable me to suffer anything for him, and I have told him so."

"I tell you again, as I told you just now, that we entirely disapprove of this engagement, and so I shall let Mr. Stanley know; if you will adhere to it, it will be utterly against our

consent, and you must not expect us to do anything to promote it."

"I can only repeat that I am extremely sorry that I cannot acquiesce in your wishes; Arthur and I feared you would oppose our engagement, but now that we have staked our happiness upon our affection, nothing will induce us to relinquish it. We have enough to bear, do not add to our trials by imposing difficulties in our intercourse, or by endeavouring to lessen our devotion to each other."

"I am only acting for your good, and you should be guided by my experience. I wonder what young people think those older than themselves are fit for, when they never follow their advice! Do you imagine I have lived all these years without being able to judge what is right better than you can? I have never seen anything but disappointment and pain ensue from long engagements, and so it will be in your case."

"I cannot pretend to see into the future; I

can only act as it seems right from what I now know ; and I am sure I should be doing very wrong to give up Arthur, when we are so deeply attached to each other ; I should never know another happy hour ! I will not attempt to disprove the imprudence of our conduct, but right has higher claims than mere prudence, and I will follow it.

We do not expect the next few years will glide by on rose-tinted wings ; sorrow and suspense, anxiety and disappointment must be borne, before peace and happiness can be ours ; but far better is any trial, when we have the consolation of each other's sympathy and affection, than the brightest destiny with divided hearts. We have never made enjoyment or happiness the aim of our hopes, for we ought not to expect them as a right, while we are fighting the battle of life. We have expected struggles and grief, and now they are come we will not shrink from them ! While we confide in each other's love, all things will be easy ; do

you think with such feelings as these I am likely to change from dread of poverty or fear of suspense?"

"I can say no more, you must act as you think best; but I will never have it on my conscience that I have promoted the folly of your adhering to your engagement; and your father fully agrees with me. In a few months you will be more reasonable, and then you will thank me for not complying with your wishes."

"If you are against us, we must rely upon ourselves. Poor Arthur! how little you are appreciated!"

"One thing you must understand, Marion: we shall not wish Mr. Stanley's visits to be frequent, not from any slight to him, but because we do not intend to encourage your intimacy."

"You need have no fear of his coming where he is unwelcome, he is too proud for that; and even were he willing to bear a cold reception

for the sake of seeing me, I would not consent to intercourse on such terms. I will endure anything rather than his being annoyed. Although our meeting would be a great comfort to us, and a great amelioration of our troubles, yet far better give it up than make him suffer."

Marion's voice, which had been calm and articulate throughout this painful discussion, faltered as she thought of the misery they would endure if her mother should remain inexorable; but she had not recourse to entreaties to induce her to sanction Arthur's visits, for she fancied she would be compromising his dignity to make it a favour for him to be admitted where formerly he had been so warmly received.

She had said all she could, and now sat with her eyes bent upon her work in silence; her feelings were so agitated that she could not have spoken with forbearance, and, with her

usual resolution, she refrained from any observation.

Mrs. Harcourt soon left the room, for she knew when that well-known look of cold composure appeared on Marion's countenance, further discussion was useless.

When she was alone, Marion's feelings would not be repressed, and laying her head upon her hands, she wept bitterly. It was not from painful surprise at her mother's opposition, for this she had anticipated, but from the overwhelming distress which weighs down a young, ardent being when it meets with mere worldly wisdom and chilling disappointment, instead of the warm, trusting enthusiasm natural to it. She thought of the wrong Arthur sustained in the supposition of her love changing with his fortunes, and while her heart throbbed with pride at his noble, disinterested conduct, she dashed away her tears, resolving never to waver in thought to him. Yet the future seemed desolate enough, for instead

of her being able to cheer and encourage him, they were to be parted. No hopes of happy hours spent together, no such beacon of light to illumine the years of suspense, was left; she could have borne anything with him, his earnest spirit would have supported her—one look of tenderness would have consoled her for all; but this prospect of pain and sorrow did not make her shrink from her resolve, she considered the cost of the trial, and resolutely determined to meet it.

When she again appeared in the drawing-room, an indifferent observer would have noticed the change in her manner and countenance. She had emerged from the struggle of the spirit with renewed strength and powers; the timid, reserved girl was now the strong, though suffering woman. She had probed the depths of her soul, and found there strength to bear all for the sake of her love. Though she looked pale and weary, there was a determined firmness on her lip, and a spiritualized energy on her brow which

showed she had come forward to the battle with an unshaken will, and a proud consciousness that her cause was a right one. She had stepped from passive being into earnest action ; she had deliberately chosen the stern path of sorrow, with only a distant chance of the fulfilment of earthly hopes ; she had adhered to the deep emotions of her heart, and the impress of the struggle was upon her.

Love had, indeed, become a stern reality to her, a living, breathing presence ; for it had brought tears and sorrow, and the world's opposition, not bright dreams, wreathing smiles, and delusive joys. Poor Marion ! Childish things had, indeed, passed away, from you, and you stood on the cold shore of life to meet its stormy waves !

CHAPTER II.

When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but
in battalions.

SHAKSPEARE.

Seest thou my home? 'Tis where yon woods are waving
In their dark richness to the summer air;
Where yon blue stream a thousand flower-banks laving,
Leads down the hills a vein of light—'tis there.

F. HEMANS.

BEFORE Arthur left town, he gave the
requisite instructions for the disposal of
Langston; he was anxious to avoid the necessity
of a sale by auction, and the many advantages
of the place made him hope that an oppor-

tunity would occur of finding a purchaser by private contract. The parties to whom he applied on this occasion, entertained no doubt about making the arrangements he wished ; indeed, from what they hinted, Stanley thought they already knew some one who might agree to his terms ; he made it a condition that the furniture and other things in the house must all be taken with it, as he could not bear the idea of their being scattered abroad. He, reserved to himself the right of selecting what he chose from the books and pictures, but with this exception, all was to be parted with. He returned to Langston by the time he had originally told Murray that he should see him, and quite astonished him by the celerity with which he had settled the preliminaries for the sale of his property.

Arthur confessed to Murray the cause of his wretchedness when he had parted with him, and related to him all that had passed since then. It by no means astonished Murray, for

he had guessed, with tolerable accuracy, what had been passing in Stanley's mind, and Marion's determination was what he would have expected from the opinion he had formed of her character. Most cordial were his congratulations that Arthur had lost the dread of the severest part of his misfortunes ; he rejoiced to see that the silent sorrow which seemed to be overwhelming him before he went to town was superseded by a more healthy tone of mind, that he was active and energetic in his plans, not from the recklessness of despair, but as if he really had an object to interest him. The truth was, hope still remained to him, that powerful incentive to exertion. Without hope, what are we? reduced to the condition of fallen angels, over the entrance to whose habitation, the master-spirit of the middle ages would have placed the dread inscription,

“Those who enter here abandon hope.”

A few days after Arthur's return to Langston, he received a letter from the firm, to whose management he had confided his affairs, containing an advantageous offer for his estate, conveyed in terms which he could not hesitate to accept. He made no delay in letting them know his sentiments, and in as short a time as was possible for examining the titles, and completing the legal documents, the business was concluded, and Langston had passed from Stanley's possession into that of strangers. It would be vain to attempt to describe the reluctance and grief with which he affixed his signature to the papers which conveyed the property, so dear to him, to another; but no trace of it was to be discerned, for he would have shrunk from his emotion being witnessed by any one; his handwriting was as firm as ever, although every letter seemed irrevocably sealing his doom. After this painful business was over, Murray left him, for he knew that he would prefer being alone the last day he was to

pass in the house of his fathers. They parted in the hall, where they had so often lounged together from their boyish days until now ; how many memories of fishing expeditions, of early sports, were clinging to that gloomy room, with its old carved ceiling and mullioned windows. They shook hands in silence, for if one was feeling that he could never again welcome his friend to that house, the other was sympathising with these emotions, and felt no words could express his concern.

Murray walked through the avenues with a slow step, pondering on the changes which had taken place since those lofty trees had waved their leafy branches in the breeze, and wondering what would be the ultimate destiny of him who, so short a time ago, seemed certain of possessing the wide-extended domain he was traversing : the sun was setting as he passed along, he thought it was emblematic of the fortunes of his friend ; but when he remembered that it would rise again with renewed splendour

on the morrow, he fervently hoped Stanley's hopes for the future might be brightly realised.

The *last* night—there is always a sense of pain in the consciousness that it is for the *last* time we are doing or seeing anything dear to us—the knowledge of the uncertain tenure by which we hold our enjoyments is so strongly implanted within us, that when we cannot hope to have them again, a bitter regret overwhelms us. Arthur indulged a thousand sad thoughts the last night he passed at Langston. He did not attempt to sleep, he did not even go to his own room, but remained until late in the library, recalling many happy hours spent there.

When all was quiet and still in the house, he determined to pay his last visit to his father's room; on his way to it he passed through the picture gallery, the pale beams of the moon streamed through the windows, and brought some of the figures into prominence, while

parts of the long room were enveloped in the deepest shadows. The lamp which Arthur carried scarcely cast a perceptible light through the gloom around. There were two empty spaces on the walls, where the portraits of his father and mother used to hang, but which had been sent to his chambers in the Temple; he could not avoid a sigh as he noticed their vacant places. The effigies of his race were around him; the armour-clad warriors of the days of chivalry, the proud cavalier with his love-locks, the stiff and courtly gentleman of more modern date; the gentle maidens of his race, and the more sober matron, were all there; and as he contemplated their images, still bright and fair, while he remembered the original features had faded long since, and were mouldering in the grave, he turned away from the mockery, and passed on to the room where so lately he had bent over the dead.

When he roused himself from his reverie, he saw the morning light was stealing over the

hazy distance. He longed to go through the woods once more, and returning to the library, he gently opened the window and strolled through into the garden; but although the flowers were fragrant and lovely, he did not linger long there, but turned to the deep shadows of the terrace, where he had heard the confession of Marion's love. It was bitter to think he should see that no more, that the feet of strangers should press the turf she had stepped upon, that their voices should echo where he had received her first whisper of affection — bitter, bitter were his feelings as he took a last glance at that place, ever to be treasured in his memory!

He then went into the woods, just fresh with the breath of sunrise, and emerging from their shade, he ascended a slight eminence, from whence he had often gazed upon the lovely landscape below. To the right the ample woods stretched far away, the early sun

glistening upon their rich, deep foliage ; to the left was the open champaign country, with some gently undulating hills bounding the horizon, a rapid stream wound along, glittering like a ribbon of silver between its emerald banks ; and in the midst of this loveliness, stood Langston, its grey turrets half-concealed amid the lofty trees which surrounded it ; and a little beyond, rose the old church tower, with a few cottages of his tenants around it. It was a scene which would have riveted the attention of the most indifferent spectator ; what effect then must it have had upon Stanley, who knew and loved every part of the domain before him, who had lived there, who had built many hopes of the future in connection with it, who had the strong interest of proprietorship in it ?

He stood and gazed until the tears blinded his eyes, and then turned away, and with a rapid step descended the hill, and returned to the house by his usual breakfast hour.

One or two letters lay on the table, the *last*

he should receive there. A trifle disturbs a man's equanimity when he is as excited as Stanley was—it is the last drop which surcharges the brimming cup—and the address upon the envelopes nearly choked him. But he had much to go through that day, and it was necessary for him to preserve his composure ; he hastily swallowed a cup of tea, and rang for the cloth to be removed. The old butler appeared, for he and all the servants were still at Langston, and would not leave for two or three days longer. He cast a wistful look upon his master, who was stooping over his desk, and said :

“ Is it really true that you are going away this morning, Sir ?”

“ Yes, Watson, I intend leaving soon. Will you settle with all the servants ? you will find the necessary sum in this writing-case, which you must keep as a remembrance of me, and of the days when you used to nurse and play with me.”

“ Oh, Sir ! to think that I should ever see this day ! It is breaking of my heart ; it is such a cruel shame, and so we all say down stairs. I will do all that is necessary, Sir, with the servants ; but won't you be pleased to see them for a minute ? they would be so much more satisfied, if they might wish you well, Sir.”

“ Really, Watson, I would rather be spared the pain of such an interview. You can say all that is kind to them from me ; but,” added he, seeing the disappointed look on the old man's face, “ if you think they would really like to say good-by, let them come into the hall in an hour's time. I shall then ride to the station.”

Watson bowed respectfully and left the room, and Arthur returned to his letter—it was a few lines to Marion, the last he would date from that place he had longed to see graced by her presence. When he had sealed it, he found the hour had passed, and without allow-

ing himself time to reflect, he walked rapidly to the hall ; but when he opened the door, he paused for an instant with surprise, for the room was full. Instead of merely finding his immediate establishment, several of the farmers and tenants were also there—grey-headed old men, who had been on the estate in his father's time and who had expected to die under the protection of a Stanley. When the young man entered, they all rose, and gazed sadly upon him as he walked into the midst of them, his pale brow slightly contracted, and a deep expression in his earnest eyes. He paused for an instant, and then began to speak ; but, although his voice was low, not a word was lost.

“ Thank you, my good friends, for this mark of your good-will. I did not expect to see you here, not that I had forgotten you, but because I felt it would be a painful interview for us all. I am very sorry that the ties which have united us are broken so suddenly ;

but I hope you will not suffer from the change. I believe the gentleman who is coming here is a good landlord, and I am sure he will find you good tenants, as you were in my poor father's time."

One old man answered :

"We do not want to be the tenants of any one else, Master. I have been here, man and boy, these sixty years, and my father and grandfather before me, Sir, and we always had a Stanley for our landlord, and I won't have no one else."

"But, my good Dennis, I cannot have you for a tenant, for I have no property left. You must remember these changes are not of our own seeking, they are sent by a good Providence. I shall often hear of you all, and how you are going on."

"And won't your honour ever come and see us?" asked one of the gamekeepers. "Any of us would be proud to offer your honour the best we had ; but don't go to say we shan't

see you again, because that is what we didn't expect."

The warm-hearted hospitality of the man touched Stanley, and his lips slightly quivered, as he listened to the earnest entreaties that he would not take a final farewell of them.

"Thank you again, all of you, for your kind wishes. I will see what is to be done. Now God bless you all!" he answered with a faltering voice.

The old housekeeper's sobs were audible, and the butler and coachman, who had tended their master's infancy, were not much more composed. All murmured blessings and farewells as he passed through them to the door; but before he could reach it, poor Dennis had seized his hand, and pressed it to his lips. This renewed the murmurs, and several others followed the old man's example. Stanley, who had never expected such a scene, was so overcome, that he could

not command his voice to speak for some minutes.

At last, he repeated : " God bless you all ! " and vanished from the room.

In another half hour he had looked his last upon his much-cherished home ; the ties were broken, and he had left it, with all its time-honoured associations, all its tender memories, to receive a stranger, who would be indifferent to its beauties and attractions. He scarcely knew how dear it was to him until he had parted with it ; slowly he rode through the park, unwilling to lose the opportunity of gazing on every tree as he passed, of stamping every glade, every avenue upon his memory ; never had it looked so lovely to him as it did that day, when he fully realised that it was lost to him for ever.

When he had passed the lodge-gates, he paused, and bent a last lingering glance upon the park within, with something of the feeling we may imagine the first son of mortality expe-

rienced, when he looked for the last time upon the blooming Paradise he had forfeited. He then turned away, and urging his horse to its full speed, he galloped off, leaving the boundaries of his ancestral property as rapidly as possible, and striving, in the madness of his speed, to drown the regret and sorrow which were raging in his heart.

CHAPTER III.

We become men, not after we have been dissipated and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure, but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life, how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world, that a man must be sufficient to himself; and that for suffering and enduring, there is no remedy but striving and doing. .

THOMAS CARLYLE.

A MONTH had passed on since Stanley had left Langston; he had been engaged in investigating the affairs of the Rivington Bank, and at last had concluded his labours. He had surrendered the whole of his property to the directors; not a hundred pounds remained in

his name in the funds ; a small sum alone was at his banker's, and he now depended entirely upon his own exertions and his professional success for any income.

It was quite a new position in which he found himself when he returned to his chambers and remembered that they were his only home—that no extraneous assistance, no gifts of fortune would be ready to compensate for want of business, or for slackening zeal ; there was no prospect of possessing a noble fortune and a home of refinement and comfort as his unalienable right ; all now must be struggled for—battled for—gained by unswerving perseverance and untiring intellect. It is such a different thing to do all this as an amateur, for the love of fame, for the gratification of ambition, when the faculties expand themselves fully, when the impetus is unshackled, and the goal is exalted ; and to know that it is necessity, stern and unremitting in its grasp, that impels us to exertion, that it

is a struggle for mere existence which goads us to the battle ; this makes all the difference in the inner feelings, in the zest with which the armour is buckled on for the encounter.

For nothing is so inciting to man as the knowledge that any self-sacrifice is voluntary ; it is a love for the toil which ennobles it, which gives the glow of enthusiasm to the material and the actual. To know that an obligation exists which binds us, soul and spirit, to constant labours, unfailing anxieties, is a harsh, a rude fact, and yet it is to what the majority of mortality are subjected ; this is what chains us so strongly to the earth and its rewards, making us forget the spiritual essence of the moral universe.

Stanley glanced round his gloomy chambers, with the rows of sombre-looking volumes ; the absence of the refinements and luxuries of life had never struck him so forcibly before ; the portraits of his father and mother were the only

traces of his former home ; they had been moved from Langston, and now hung on the faded, dingy walls, like the influence of affection amid the wrecks of fortune.

Although he fully realized his position, and could not entirely banish the disappointment he felt, knowing the change it had made in his prospects with regard to Marion, yet he had a proud determination to make a position for himself, which she should share when the world should acknowledge his superiority, although it might now scorn his fallen fortunes. For Stanley was most proud ; he had long despised the attentions and courtesies he had received, knowing that they had been given to his advantages and expectations far more than to himself ; he had felt contempt and indifference for the homage society had paid him, and he now felt anxious to show how independent he was of its smiles or frowns, by being true to himself, and winning a higher place by his intellect, than that of which he had been

deprived by the unexpected circumstances of loss of fortune.

There was a slight tinge of bitterness in his feelings—for who can indulge a doubting, depreciating opinion of human nature, and yet preserve “the milk of human kindness?” Stanley almost felt at war with his fellows, and in the strength of his own powers, resolved to match himself against them. There were a few exceptions to this general dislike; but the image of Marion was the predominating influence for good on his horizon. He knew she loved him for himself alone, that in the hour of his distress and ruin she had but clung the closer to his fate; he remembered the readiness she had shown to adhere to her faith through troubles and all evil; that the reserve which he had in vain endeavoured to dissipate in his brighter days had vanished when sorrow overwhelmed him, had been broken down by the flood of tenderness and affectionate sympathy which she had showered upon him when he

was so bitterly tried. He took her miniature from his desk, and gazing fondly on it, tried to gain confidence and an augury for success from the gentle features ; but the painter had delineated a look of soft sadness, of loving sympathy, of dreamy sweetness in those pure eyes, which seldom appeared in the clear glance of the original, and which made many call it an unfaithful likeness. But Stanley knew that expression well ; it had often beamed on him, and he cherished the portrait all the more for representing the look which he felt was exclusively his own. If he could not read a prophecy of triumphant success on the calm, sweet face, he saw a mild light of love and peace, which sank into his weary heart like dew on the burning earth, and which told him, that in all trials, in all circumstances, those eyes would still rest on him with that loving, confiding expression, that those scarcely-parted lips would ever breathe a welcome of sympathy and affection.

Marion's love was the softening, hallowing influence in the gloom of Stanley's life. Without it, he would have lost his interest in others, he would have wrapped himself in his impenetrable reserve; and although his ardour and intellect would have won him a path to fame over the busy multitude, yet he would have been like the burning, impetuous current from the volcano, which may conquer all obstacles, yet leaves no vivifying, enlightening traces behind it. Now he had the dearest hopes to encourage him, the most precious object to incite him to exertion; to struggle for his love was a holy aim; and when he bent over the dusty parchments, and riveted all his attention upon them, the very labour became welcome, as the means to the fulfilment of his wishes. He had not seen Marion since the morning when he had told her of his misfortunes, and had received the assurance of her unchanging love; for the hostility of her parents made him unwilling to call, to subject himself to their

coldness, and to give an opportunity for them to annoy Marion by talking slightly of him. He heard constantly from her ; and her warm-hearted, affectionate letters prevented his feeling the separation as he would otherwise have done. His doubts and suspicions were lulled into oblivion by the tone of her correspondence. At this time he confided unhesitatingly in her truth and constancy ; and in the comfort which this assurance gave him, he sometimes thought his present position was preferable to the one he had occupied, when it prevented him giving full credence to the sincerity of others. For he could not forget the hours of uncertainty and vacillation he had passed in those very chambers during the first few months of his acquaintance with Marion, when his suspicious misgivings of human nature had made him shrink from attaching his happiness to the risk of the truth of another.

He looked upon these feelings as passed away for ever, as obliterated from his heart, the

chance of their return never occurred to him, and while such letters lay on his desk as Marion so frequently sent him, perhaps he would not indulge any doubts; but it was no trial for him, just after Marion had proved her affection by adhering to him, in spite of obstacles and opposition. Will he trust in her, will he confide in her, should unexplained circumstances intervene between them, and make the appearance of her change almost a certainty? Will the faith in her love, which is now burning pure and bright, then remain undimmed and unclouded? We know not yet; but when any feelings or ideas have been habitually indulged, the mind never loses their impress, and sooner or later their influence will assert itself. For great, incalculably great, is the force of habit! it is one of the most powerful forces of the universe — resistless, like the never-ending wash of the ocean-tide upon the shore, piling up its accumulated masses upon the surface; the growth of

ages, which, although most minute and insignificant in detail, at last defy all power to destroy them.

The years Stanley had passed in the cold regions of suspicion and mockery, of sarcasm and irony, had worked their effect upon his mind, and at some period the feelings he had outraged by doubts must avenge themselves upon him. Nothing we do, nothing we feel, is without a consequence, is without an effect; immeasurably wide spread the branches which have sprung from the tiny acorn. Alas! that men should forget this so often; that they should yield to impulse, to passion, as to irresistible giants, and only awake after the evil has become irretrievable, because it has been *done*, because the action has been completed, and been flung out beyond all recall into the never-ceasing, ever-rushing waters of Time! They awake to the agonies of remorse and repentance when the *consequences* of their sin and folly become apparent. This is a

painful, penal deed ; it is not the inherent deformity, the natural degradation of evil, which has called them to self-reproach, but personal inconvenience, personal suffering. It is good for men to be moral, because they dread the wages of sin ; but far better, far nobler to be virtuous, to keep pure, from love of the good, from appreciation of the beautiful. It is good to be moral from the earthly motive of reward, from the knowledge of the pleasantness of well-doing, and the wretchedness of evil, from the profit-and-loss morality of the worldly-wise, but far better to shrink from sin, as from a fiend, and to cling to virtue, because it is virtue, even though it be shrouded in sorrow and suffering.

However, Stanley did not think of all this ; his incredulity was not called into exercise, therefore he concluded it no longer existed, as many flatter themselves they are incapable of yielding to temptations, because their syren voices have never reached their ear. The

summer was drawing to a close, the dissipation of the season was at an end, therefore Stanley was not annoyed by hearing of Marion's gaiety, in which he could not participate, for of course his father's recent death, without any other reason, would have prevented his mingling in society at present.

Mr. and Mrs. Colston were out of town, or he might have met Marion there ; for they were such old friends of his, that no circumstances would have interfered with his intercourse with them. The Vernons were anxious for him to visit them, but Fountain Court was too near Langston for him to go there voluntarily while the pain of losing it was still fresh on his memory.

Stanley confined himself very closely to his professional avocations, determined to lose no opportunities for advancement ; he was to be found occasionally at his club, although instead of reading in the library there during the evenings, as he had formerly done, he now often

returned to chambers to complete business. Murray often contrived to meet him at dinner, interesting and amusing him with his company ; and sometimes a knot of men would assemble in the smoking-room. Surrounded by society to which he had been accustomed, Arthur forgot the change in his position ; for it matters less at a club than elsewhere whether a man has five thousand or five hundred a year. Take young men generally, as a mass, they care but little whether their companion be a man of large fortune or not ; if he be in a good set, and is clever and amusing, they ask no more. Of course there are some weak-minded individuals, who value their acquaintances by their rent-rolls ; and some scheming ones, who disregard a poor man, because they cannot turn him to any account. But generally speaking, it is another class who value a man exclusively for his money, and they were precisely the people to whom Stanley was perfectly indifferent. Manœuvring mothers, who, in his

prosperous days, had been most pressing in their hospitality, most warm in their reception of him, might drop his acquaintance without causing a passing regret, or exciting a stronger feeling than a smile of contempt at the vanity and hollowness of the world. Busy politicians, who had courted him from his prospects of entering Parliament, might regard him as a cypher, now that his county influence was gone, without his lamenting their defection ; for he secretly felt that they would one day regret their time-service, when, notwithstanding his present prospects, he would yet be in a position they would think worthy of endeavouring to gain to their interests. So that Arthur found but a trifling difference at the club ; many men markedly sought his society more since his loss of fortune from respect for his conduct, and others did so because he had always been a clever companion. The very few who showed any coldness were those who had writhed under the lash of Stanley's sar-

casm, or had felt the withering sneer of his smile ; they availed themselves of the change in his position to appear above him ; but such petty littleness was altogether thrown away, for as long as Arthur was not bored by their society, he never troubled himself to inquire the reason of their distance.

Murray and Stanley were lounging at the club one evening, talking of their mutual acquaintance, when the former said :

“ Have you heard that Warrenne, the lady-killer, is caught at last ? ”

“ No, indeed. With all his boasts of his subduing influence, and also with his talent to avoid committing himself, I thought he was tolerably sure to escape the enticing baits which were laid to allure him into the entangling net of matrimony. To whom has he struck his flag ? ”

“ To some one for whom you have a particular aversion, who has not a large fortune in possession, whatever she may have in expecta-

tion, who has not high rank, or great influence ; in fact who has none of the indispensable qualifications which the most noble Reginald Warrenne considered his many fascinations deserved."

"Then what has conquered him ? Untiring perseverance in hunting down their game, I suppose, carefully maintained propinquity, and that sort of thing ; but tell me the lady's name, Murray."

"Miss Lucy Brandon is the happy fair who holds the conqueror of her sex in her charms ; and I understand the rose-links of love are very shortly to be strengthened by the more enduring ones of law."

"She is resolved to make assurance doubly sure. Fancy Warrenne marrying that piece of deception and worldliness ! I am sure he never meant to entangle himself in that way. Poor fellow ! with all his folly, he deserved a better fate. But I thought the Brandons had much more exalted matches in anticipation. I am

sure a year or two ago they would have disdained Warrenne's income."

"But, my dear fellow, don't you know when an article has been long exposed for sale its value decreases? Now, these girls have been seen everywhere for several seasons, and it has been so well known that they were open to any eligible offer, which means, in their language, a good fortune, never mind by whom possessed, that as they did not take, they were beginning to find out they must abate their high pretensions."

"Exactly, the young ladies had discovered that pink and white complexions, good eyes, and ten thousand pounds, are not enough to buy a first-rate establishment, and like wise people, have resolved to lower their terms, before they lose their charms; and by means of all their address and ingenuity, they have succeeded in hooking poor Warrenne."

"I understand the parents pretend that they do not quite like the thing, but of course

they cannot interfere with dear Lucy's affections, poor, sensitive girl !”

“ Nonsense—she could get up an attachment for me to-morrow, if I could and would settle five thousand pounds more on her than Warrenne can ; talk of her affections indeed !”

“ It is rather a joke certainly, for the old people to play the high and mighty now that Warrenne has proposed, when all the world knows how persevering they have been in their attacks upon him ; what dinners have been given for him ; how conveniently Lucy has been thrown upon his protection in the crush-room at the Opera, or at their departure from the *fêtes* ; how curiously it has happened, that she was always riding by him in Rotten Row, until at last it seemed as if he could not withdraw from the meshes of the silken net which entangled him.”

“ I will give them credit for managing the thing cleverly enough ; they have plenty of tact ; and after all, that is the most effective

weapon, offensive and defensive, which women possess. I suppose the other two will soon be successful in their chase after husbands?"

"I think Florence is above that sort of thing; she is certainly superior to her sisters, both in mind and appearance. I believe she is not so spoilt by the world, or so selfish and insincere."

"Take care, Murray, they are beginning to draw their magic lines round you. Are you sure the young lady has not a fancy for India? Have you not discovered a suddenly awakened curiosity in her to know of the state of society of the East? to hear of its beauties, of the serpents, anything connected with your affairs? and yet the conversation is so carefully interspersed with exclamations from Mrs. Brandon of the horrors of such a life, that you feel perfectly assured that nothing would induce her to consent to one of her daughters being banished to such a dreadful place."

"You are really too bad, Stanley, in your

suspensions ; yet, after all, I believe some such process has been commenced ; however, I am too old a hand to be caught by such means."

"So Warrenne thought, and you see what has happened. However, I suppose in such cases, advice is worse than useless, so I shall not waste mine on you, only take care ; for although you may throw up a flirtation when you get tired of it, remember a wife is taken for life—rather a serious consideration ! How late it is, I must get back to the Temple at once. Good-night."

CHAPTER IV.

Take courage, prisoner of time, for there are many
comforts,

Cease thy labour in the pit, and bask awhile with truants
in the sun—

Calamities come not as a curse, nor prosperity for other
than a trial ;

Struggle—thou art better for the strife, and the very
energy shall hearten thee.

Love is a sweet idolatry, enslaving all the soul ;

A mighty spiritual force, warring with the dullness of
matter ;

An angel-mind breathed into a mortal, though fallen,
yet how beautiful !

All the devotion of the heart in all its depth and grandeur.

MARTIN F. TUPPER.

MARION suffered more from the separation
than Stanley did, for while he had the ab-
sorbing occupation of his profession, and

frequent intercourse with the outer world, as a relief from the contemplation of his annoyances, she had nothing to divert her from the inner world, from the presence of her own thoughts and feelings ; she had no opportunity for any very active employment ; duties, of course, she had, and she endeavoured to fulfil them, but they were easy, monotonous occupations, utterly incapable of preventing her feeling the sudden absence of Arthur's society, of the loss of the hopes of seeing him, of the memory of one interview which lasted until another came, which had given such an interest and impetus to existence. Every pursuit was so connected with him—for he had looked over her drawings, had listened to her music, had recommended her books—that they all reminded her but too strongly of the happier days of their intercourse, and made her suffer the more keenly from the loneliness and isolation she felt now they were parted.

Yet she earnestly strove against this heart-

weariness, and to conquer the listlessness and apathy which seemed corroding her being. With a little judicious tenderness, a little sympathy, she would have been far better ; but Mrs. Harcourt considered any allusion to Stanley, any admission of her attachment to him, was only encouraging the weakness ; therefore unless a passing hint of him, mingled with some slighting inuendo, or some mocking taunt of constancy were spoken, nothing passed about the state of her feelings. She was left entirely to herself ; and nothing is so bad for the young as to live in this chilling reserve, to dwell incessantly upon their thoughts, without any one to understand them, to sympathize with them ; at last they sink into a dull, leaden state, without the buoyancy and spirit, which are natural to them.

Marion did not allow any of these miserable sensations to appear in her letters to Stanley, for she knew how it would grieve him to think she was suffering, and all her anxiety was to

save him from annoyance and pain. She knew that he loved her, and this consoled her for her sorrow ; and in thinking of this, she endeavoured to overcome the apathy to other things, which seemed to envelop her. She knew that it was wrong to feel this indifference, and struggled against it. Poor girl ! had she possessed a deeper insight into human nature, she would have known that what she was now feeling, was the inevitable consequence of the excitement she had experienced about Arthur's misfortunes ; that it was the ebb after the high tide of devotion and sympathy ; and that time and patience would restore her to equanimity, and to a more healthy tone of mind. This anxiety and restlessness of spirit had an effect upon Marion's appearance ; her cheek grew paler, her eyes looked heavy and sad, and altogether a languor and depression seemed to have superseded the graceful energy which had before characterised her. Fortunately she was on the point of leaving town, for Mrs. Harcourt wisely

considered change of air would be beneficial to her; but instead of their going to a lovely retired part of the country, as Marion had wished to do, that she might refresh herself with the sweet influence of Nature, they had taken a house in one of the fashionable watering-places on the south coast, which presented a very similar appearance to London, with the addition of the sea.

Here crowds of loungers sauntered about in the mornings, basking in the unfailing sunshine, gazing into the gay shops at the many articles of *bijouterie* and luxury which abounded everywhere, or whiling away the hours in reading-rooms, or on the esplanades. Then in the afternoon, the same faces might be seen in carriages, or on horseback, driving and riding from cliff to cliff, recognizing their acquaintance, and enjoying the gay scene. Here the Harcourts' carriage might be frequently seen, Marion leaning back in one corner, generally muffled in a black veil, looking perfectly indifferent and unconscious of all around

her, returning the salutations of their friends with most provoking *insouciance* ; for graceful as her bow might be, the vainest of men could not but feel it was only the commonest politeness which prompted her to notice him at all. Indeed, of all modes of passing time, this of driving continually in a crowd was the most wearying to Marion ; the constant succession of houses, different though they were in form and design ; the repetition of squares and terraces ; the undeviating line of road ; the never-ceasing stream of gay passengers, all combined to annoy her.

The gorgeous skies, which almost seem to connect this queen of watering-places with more southern climes, were to her the only redeeming point about it ; and it was with unfeigned delight that she gazed upon the brilliantly-tinted sunset clouds, and rich glow reflected upon the sparkling ocean, and on the hazy outline of the coast which bounded the bay ; at the sharply-defined shadows of the fishing-boats in the

purple and golden waves, or turned towards the east, and saw the white cliffs rising with dazzling brightness against the blue heavens. However, the elastic purity of the air soon restored the bloom to Marion's cheek, although her loss of animation proceeded from causes which no sea-breezes would remove. The contrast between their present abode, and the romantic beauty of Fenton, where she had been the preceding year, was constantly recurring to Marion; but she forgot that even the loveliness of its scenery would not appear so fascinating were she to gaze upon it now. The pursuit she most enjoyed was riding with her father. Sometimes he would propose accompanying her for a few hours' expedition over the neighbouring downs; and many were the delightful gallops Marion had over the short elastic turf which covered the round summits of the hills, where the furze and heather grew wildly, and almost perfect solitude reigned around.

While she was careering over this open

country, the cool breeze playing on her cheek, she felt exhilarated and refreshed, for there is no cure for low spirits like horse exercise, and she returned to her daily duties with something more of her former activity and cheerfulness.

Her mind was gradually recovering its powers of endurance and fortitude ; and although a keen observer would soon be aware that she had a secret spring of sadness, she began to take more interest in surrounding circumstances, and to smile less vacantly and coldly. Mrs. Harcourt hoped these were signs that her prognostications of her changing her feelings for Stanley were being verified ; but a hint she once gave of this opinion, called such a warm and enthusiastic avowal of her unaltered affection, and such expressions of her determination to adhere to her engagement from Marion, that she dropped the subject, and never willingly alluded to it again.

Arthur was very regular in his correspondence ; this was a great comfort to Marion, who

looked forward with such delight to his letters, that they were like streams in the desert to a thirsty traveller. He wrote so tenderly, so hopefully, so cheeringly of his prospects, that she felt ashamed of having given way so completely at being parted from him, and by her interest in his progress, roused herself from thinking of the evils of their position. The more she reflected upon Arthur's conduct, the prouder she felt of him, and the more exalted and ennobled was her love.

For love, which merits bearing the name of that passion, must have its object worthy of respect and esteem, or doubts will assert themselves, and "doubt is the death of love." Unless we can *believe* in the principles, in the moral consistency, in the high and noble qualities of the being we love, there can be no faith, no confidence; and without these feelings, love is the most weak and wavering of passions. Almost anything will then overpower it; it has

no foundation, no self-reliance, nothing to preserve it from the deadening influence of sordid materialism ; nothing to shield it from the contaminations of the world ; nothing to strengthen it against all obstacles ; nothing to give it constancy in absence, to make it more powerful than death, and coexistent with eternity !

It will sink beneath the heavy hand of sorrow, that inexorable destiny which follows man, which will prove its power during some part of his life, making him acknowledge his own inability to retain the fleeting rainbow-hues of happiness, showing him how vain it is to make enjoyment the aim of his endeavours, or the object for his reward. For labour, struggles, weakness and disappointments are the appointed companions of mortality ; and in weighing the cost of right, these must be considered as its attendants, or the soldier who has dedicated himself to the battle against evil will soon

succumb to the foe, for he will too often find that in this world success and victory are awarded to the enemies of the good work, while he must pursue his course through dim and thorny paths.

Yes! sorrow is a great mystery, but in its depths the soul may learn its own powers and destination; it is also a great reality, for it hems us in on all sides, and no mortal can live many years without feeling its grasp. Like the inward flames of the universe, which lie hidden beneath its sunny surface, the fiery influence of sorrow is ever near us, even when circumstances smile most brightly.

Love, the heaven-sprung principle, is the only power which can truly overcome its bitterness; and when it comes as a breathing reality, animating, exalting, and ennobling us, then even sorrow must yield its forces; and while its depths still remain unfathomable, their gloom is lost in the pure effulgence of that love which "beareth all things, be-

lieveth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

In a woman's true love, there is always a tinge of adoration, of worship ; she looks up to the object of her affection as something superior in his qualities, and in his powers, she is content to bask in the reflected light of his nobility ; and while she soothes, softens and purifies him, she relies, depends, confides in him. The man she loves is the hero of her life, and as one of the most original and eloquent writers of our time maintains, hero-worship is the feature which most proves the vitality and stability of human goodness and progress.

Arthur was all this to Marion's loving, enthusiastic nature ; she dwelt on his image as a priceless treasure, his influence pervaded every thought, and would outlive all opposition, all evil, and stretch into the illimitable regions of eternity. How vain was it then for people to endeavour to conquer it, to extinguish it, to

crush it by prudential advice and worldly consideration; while he loved her, there was hope, and with hope, love can never die. As Marion recovered her energy and fortitude, her love seemed more powerful, more inspiring; and it was with renewed vigour that she looked forward to the time when their probation should be ended, and she should be able to smile on Arthur when triumph awaited him, or soothe him when he was weary with the strife of the world.

All the daily annoyances, of slight and doubts, which were purposely hinted at in her presence, lost their sting when she remembered that it was for *him* she was bearing them, that it was a part of the sacrifice she had voluntarily made for his sake, when she had vowed to be true to him through everything. Mrs. Harcourt often wondered at the beaming light which shone in Marion's eyes, when she let any inuendo against Stanley escape her; she little knew what feel-

ings were sanctifying the struggling emotions, or what was the power which made her withstand all opposition. Hers was a nature which could not comprehend the depths of such a love as Marion's; she did not believe in its existence, and attributed her adherence to her engagement to obstinacy and love of contrariety, and treated her accordingly, which would have soured a temper less equable, less amiable than hers was.

The autumn was passing on, with its clear brightness and sunny cheeriness, the last lingering influences of summer were daily diminishing; perhaps in no other place but that where the Harcourts were, would this genial warmth have remained so long, for while London and many other places were enveloped in fog and gloom, its inhabitants revel in an almost Italian purity of atmosphere, and are seen lounging about in November with a gentle pace, quite indicative of a summer temperature.

This charm will ever keep its cliffs thronged and its mansions inhabited, notwithstanding the monotony and insipidity of its environs and surrounding country. It is emphatically the place for idlers, for while its pure and invigorating air tempts people out of doors, there is no object of interest to occupy them, which accounts for the groups of loungers and streams of people sauntering about without any apparent object, content to gaze on their neighbours, and to look over the London papers. It is a place where every one is to be seen at some time in the year; friends meet here who believe that each is far away, yet by some mysterious magnet all seem attracted to this arena of gaiety, where society is vigorously pursued; indeed, amusement is apparently the sole object and aim of all who visit this favoured and favourite metropolis of the sea.

No wonder such a place wearied Marion, and made her anticipate the time when she

should again find herself in her tranquil home in London, notwithstanding the gloom and sombreness which belong to the crowded town.

CHAPTER V.

Oh! if the selfish knew how much they lost,
What would they not endeavour, not endure
To imitate, as far as in them lay,
Him who makes his wisdom and his power
In making others happy.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

FOUNTAIN COURT was now in its autumnal garb, and with the foliage and flowers of summer, much of its beauty had departed. The grounds looked desolate and gloomy with the withered leaves strewed in the shrubberies, the many-tinted dahlias and chrysanthums drooped beneath the chillness of the

early frosts; the prospect from the house, which had been so pleasing when the fields were rich with corn, and when the trees had spread their leafy branches in brightness above them, now was monotonous and wearying; the brown hue of the meadows and bare boughs as they waved in the morning winds offered nothing to delight the eye.

Captain Vernon was a keen sportsman, and was indefatigable with his gun; and while Adeline was lamenting the autumnal weather, he rejoiced to see the leaves fall that he might get his cover-shooting. This devotion to sport brought a great change to Adeline; she was left so much to herself that she grew weary of the country. Instead of her husband being ready to drive her in the pony-carriage, or to accompany her in her rides, many days he appeared in shooting costume at breakfast, when perhaps two or three gentlemen joined him, and he then started for the woods, seldom appearing

again before dinner-time. He had been so devoted in his attentions to Adeline ever since their marriage, that she felt the change very much. She was not willing to acquiesce in the inevitable change which a woman must experience when the lover subsides into the friend and husband. Instead of meeting Vernon cheerfully, and endeavouring to please and charm him, as she used to do, she showed him that she was hurt, annoyed and unhappy ; and although this conduct might elicit affectionate and tender excuses from him, yet it inwardly vexed him, for he was by no means inclined to sacrifice his sport to the fancies of his wife, fond as he was of her. Selfishness, selfishness ! the bane of happiness. Instead of Adeline taking an interest in her husband's pursuits, and showing him how glad she was for him to enjoy them, she was always decrying them, and speaking in slighting terms of them, until Vernon became quite irritated.

Some such result as this must invariably follow, when people act in the careless, aimless way in which Frederic and Adeline had done, without thought for the future.

They had neglected all duties for each other's society ; impulse, not reflection, had guided them ; and now that their feelings were changing, and this state of things had come to an end, as all phases of being at last do, Adeline rebelled, and endeavoured by foolish resentment and affected jealousy, to win her husband back to his former devotion. But this could not be. When a man has once awoke from such an absorbing passion as his had been, to his former occupations, it is worse than useless to endeavour to immerse him again in its dreamy atmosphere ; far better then to retain his affection, his rational feelings, to cultivate his tastes, to let him find his wife an agreeable companion, to whose society he can resort with pleasure, without being compelled to resign all his own pursuits and employments

to prevent her feeling *ennui* and disappointment.

How very much depends upon a woman's conduct at this eventful period of her life ! All men will, sooner or later, wish to return to their intercourse with the world, to their struggles and aims in its arena. They do not feel the same sufficing interest in the mere indulgence and cultivation of the feelings as women do, who generally would wish to prolong the honeymoon through life. But let them be assured that no man of energetic powers *can* do this ; he will not love his wife the less because he is not so constantly with her, rather will he consider her society as a haven of peace, as a refuge from troubles and annoyance ; let her then acquiesce gracefully in the necessity for the change in her position, and she will then retain her place in the deep and enduring affections of his heart.

Adeline had no fixed occupations, nothing which much interested her. Now the flowers

were gone, the garden had lost its charms, she seldom went in it, but lounged away the mornings in her boudoir, with some novel, or perhaps exerted herself sufficiently to write a note. The piano was seldom opened, for she did not care to play or sing, unless some one was there to listen. Unless she was obliged to pay a visit, she began to consider driving a bore; and sometimes let days elapse without using the carriage; no wonder she became *ennuyée* and out of spirits, for she made no effort to rouse, to amuse herself, and at last made Vernon quite uneasy about her. One morning at breakfast, he could not help remarking how she was changed, saying :

“What is the matter with you, love? Are you not well? You look so pale and dull.”

“I am wearied to death of this place, Fred, everything looks so cheerless and wretched.”

“But I thought you were so pleased with it, dearest. You used to declare you preferred living here to being in town. What has changed it?”

“It is so different now, it seems like another scene. When I was always with you I liked it, we used to have such pleasant drives and walks; but now you leave me alone so often, that I am dreadfully dull.”

“Certainly, since the shooting began I have been away from you, but you know that is inevitable—it is always the case in the autumn. Look how Lady Egmont, and Mrs. Somerville, and all the ladies about here, get on in a state of temporary widowhood; their husbands are either in Scotland or somewhere else, shooting. At all events, they are out all day. You know they have shot several times with me lately, but they do not make themselves wretched about it.”

“I cannot help it, it is such a change for me.

We used to be so happy, and now you do not care for me."

"My dear love, what nonsense you do talk. Don't you know we are an old married couple now, and must return to our former employments? Are not our evenings very pleasant? You should go out more, and not shut yourself up like a hot-house plant. When did you walk to the farm last?"

"I have not been there since that morning you went with me—I hate walking alone!"

"Why, that is a month ago. No wonder you look pale; indeed, Adeline, you must not give way to these habits. We cannot always be together; but if you fret when I am away, you make me very uncomfortable. What beautiful fresh mornings you have lost!"

"I shall be so glad when the shooting is over, and then you will not have the same

inducement to go away. It is a most selfish enjoyment."

Vernon was inclined to defend his favourite amusement; but he saw Adeline was annoyed and restless, and with a laugh he merely said:

"Not more selfish for me to indulge my tastes occasionally than for you to follow yours. However, perhaps I have been very eager in my sport lately; I forgot that you were not accustomed to be alone. Ha! there is the new horse being led round. Come and look at it."

Adeline followed her husband to the window; and after they had admired the new purchase, he said:

"How fine it is. Come, we will have a nice walk, dearest, and see if we cannot make you look a little brighter. Run up stairs and put on your bonnet, and we will go through the shrubberies, across to the farm, and round through the woods."

He kissed her affectionately before she left the room, and begging her to be quick, and to meet him at the kennels, he went out. It was rather an act of self-denial on Vernon's part to give up his shooting this day, for he had intended going into some of the preserves, where he expected to find several pheasants which had hitherto eluded his gun; however, he could not bear to see Adeline looking so depressed, and was giving the necessary orders to the keepers about the dogs, as he had changed his plans, when she appeared. There was a smile something like that of olden days playing on her lips, and a flush of her former rich complexion on her cheek, when Vernon complimented her upon the effect of her coquetish little bonnet and of her elegant furred jacket. She pleased him by patting one or two of his favourite spaniels, and by looking at some new kennels which were just completed, instead of turning away with the impatience she generally manifested when he

had before sought to interest her in favour of his canine pets. He did not tax her patience by detaining her among them, but whistling to a handsome retriever, which was his constant companion in his walks, he opened the gate which led into the shrubberies, and giving Adeline his arm, they were soon stepping briskly along over the ground, crisp with the hoar-frost. When they reached the farm, and paused to admire the snug comfort which prevailed, Vernon turned fondly to his wife, and said :

“Come, dearest, I am glad to see you looking more like yourself again. You are rather different now to what you were when you leant over the breakfast-table this morning. You will not get on in the country, I am afraid ; for what with being magistrate, and in the Yeomanry Corps, I shall be often obliged to leave you to yourself, and then you will pine : this must not be, love.”

“ But I cannot help being dull when I am alone, Fred. I cannot endure solitude ; I always told you so, when you proposed living in the country.”

“ Would you like to have Marion with you ? you must miss her very much ; let us ask her to spend a month or two with us, and then you can take her to the Hunt Ball, where, you know, you are to be queen.”

“ But I am sure mamma will not let her come, for fear of our facilitating her meeting Mr. Stanley. She is so determined to keep them apart, that nothing will make her consent to any plan which is likely to frustrate this arrangement.”

“ Poor Marion ! I am very sorry for her ; she writes in very depressed spirits, I think ; I wish we could do something to amuse her.”

Adeline had a secret wish to induce Vernon to spend the winter abroad, but she had

never mentioned the subject to him ; however, she thought the present was a good opportunity, and as they struck into the woods, she began her attack.

“ But, after all, Fred, I do not think coming here would cheer her much ; for everything must be connected with Mr. Stanley, and there is nothing going on in the neighbourhood. I am so *gênée* that she would not be enlivened much. I quite dread the prospect of the dark winter months in this secluded place.”

“ My dear love, I am sorry you have taken such a dislike to poor Fountain Court ; I was in hopes you would always be fond of it ; it really is a pretty place.”

“ Yes, it is in the summer ; perhaps I shall like it again then ; but you know I always had a fancy for wandering about, and we have always been quite stationary.”

“ Well, love, I should very well like to make a tour with you ; but we should have

thought of this before; the season is too far advanced for travelling. Fancy going into Wales or Scotland this frosty weather; we should be miserable; we must wait until the spring, and then we shall have plenty of time to talk over our plans, and to decide where to go."

"But then we shall be obliged to pass the winter here, which is what I dislike. I do not see why we should go either to Wales or Scotland; there are plenty of other places, where we should find a warmer climate than this."

"Your fancy is running upon a winter abroad, I see; I never thought of that. Well, we certainly have not any very stringent ties to England, and I dare say we could manage to enjoy ourselves very much."

"I should like it of all things, love; you remember I have never been on the continent, and it would be so delightful to go there with you."

“We must think about it. Which would you prefer, to stay in Paris, or to go on into Italy?”

“Oh, to winter in Italy, by all means ! that would be realizing one of my favourite air-castles. Dearest Frederic, this is kind of you to accede to my wishes ; I shall be mad with joy, and then we shall come back and find this place looking as prettily as when we first came to it.”

“I hope you will think so, for I shall always be fond of it ; for this was our first home, and the scene of all our happy days.”

Adeline was smiling her brightest smiles, and looking as animated and lovely as when Captain Vernon had first surrendered his heart to her charms. They went on chatting gaily and pleasantly of the past and the future, enjoying the fresh clear air, and the sunshine as it glittered upon the frost which hung on the branches of the underwood, through which

the handsome retriever was making his way, cracking the brittle twigs and shaking down the few withered leaves which still hung in the sheltered glades. When they reached the house, Vernon followed Adeline into her boudoir saying :

“One thing we have forgotten in our plans, love, is about your sister ; she will be so wretched without ever seeing you, particularly since Stanley’s misfortunes. Don’t you think we could manage for her to accompany us ?”

“I should like to have her very much. Thank you for thinking of it, I will write to her about it. I am sure the change would do her good.”

“I should think Mrs. Harcourt would be very glad for her to leave England just now, as she is so averse to her seeing Stanley ; that will make it safe at all events, for he cannot get away from business.”

“I expect Marion will be the one to

refuse our invitation, she will not like giving up the chance of meeting Stanley, slight though it be; she will have some idea that he will feel hurt, although I am sure he would be glad for her to have any change, for he must know how much she is annoyed at home."

"Will you write and say all you can to induce her to go with us. I think she will yield, for she must see she can do no good for Stanley at present."

"It is a miserable engagement. I wish it had never been entered upon, for I suppose nothing will make her give it up."

"You must lose no time in making your arrangements, or we shall experience all the cold before we start for the south; write to Marion by to-night's post, and I will send a few lines to Stanley, to tell him what we are plotting against his ladye-love."

Adeline sat down to her desk in excellent spirits, and wrote to her sister in glow-

ing terms of her anticipated pleasure, and pressed her most warmly to increase it by her society.

Vernon had no more occasion to complain of his wife's depression or dulness, she was all life and spirit, for she had an object in view which interested her, and all her *ennui* and gloom had vanished before the new excitement. How much injury love of excitement brings in its train, it is the ruin of women, it makes them restless and discontented, a burden to themselves and to others.

If Adeline had not been married to a man of ample fortune, who could afford to gratify her caprices, she would have become a prey to languor and inertia, unless some real misfortune had come upon her, and forcibly aroused her from her dreamy, complaining inactivity.

CHAPTER VI.

Pride's unrelenting hand
 Soon will divide us,
Moments like these be banned,
 Trysting denied us.
Force may our steps compel,
Hearts will not say farewell—
Can power affection quell?
 Never—no, never!

By the thrice hallowed past,
 Love's tenderest token;
By bliss too sweet to last,
 Faith yet unbroken;
By all we're doomed to hear,
By this sad kiss and tear,
I will not forget thee, dear,
 Never—no, never!

ALARIC WATTS.

ADELINE was not wrong in her conjectures that Marion would feel reluctant to leave

England just now, notwithstanding the pleasure with which she had always anticipated a continental trip. But she could not bear the idea of abandoning Stanley when he was in his present arduous position : although she did not see him, it was something to know he was not very distant, and that she could write constantly. Mr. and Mrs. Harcourt were most anxious for her to accept the Vernons' invitation, and used every argument to overcome her dislike to it ; but Marion still hesitated, until a letter from Stanley induced her to change her determination. Captain Vernon was wise when he appealed to Arthur for assistance in furthering his plan of taking Marion abroad ; and fortunately, the day his letter arrived, he had passed her in the carriage, and had been struck by her pale cheeks. Although he was as averse as Marion could be to her going so far, yet when he remembered that for the next few months there was but little chance of their renewing their intercourse, he entreated her to accompany her sister to

Italy, as he felt much more anxious about her now, knowing how unhappy her parents' conduct to him made her, than he should, even were she so many miles away from him. Therefore, Marion occupied herself with preparations for her departure. It was arranged that she should join the Vernons at Fountain Court ; and after remaining a day or two there, go on with them to Southampton, where they proposed embarking.

Very different sensations agitated Marion on this, her second visit to Adeline, than those which she had felt the first time she had seen her after her marriage ; for she now knew she was deeply loved, she had learned by experience how strong affection is, she had proved the power of sorrow, whose influence was still over her ; she had discovered the difference between imagination and reality. If Captain Vernon had greeted her kindly the first time he had received her as a guest, his welcome now was still warmer, for his generous, manly heart

grieved for the depression which he saw was weighing her down. It was a cold November afternoon, when he and Marion were driving from the station to Fountain Court; a white fog hung over the valleys, and the bleak, frosty air penetrated through the closed windows of the carriage, and made Marion shiver, notwithstanding her numerous wraps.

"I hope it will be warmer than this to-morrow," said Vernon as he drew a large furred cloak round Marion, "or you will suffer terribly. You are not so strong as you used to be; I remember when you laughed at a little frost, and enjoyed it."

"I suppose I have a cold, or I should not feel it now so much; and then the country is always colder than London; think of the change from streets and squares to these open hills."

"Adeline complains very much of keen winds, but if she fancies she will not find any in Italy, she will be quite disappointed, for I

assure you the Tramontana is very bitter occasionally."

The carriage was driving past the shrubberies which had been a favourite walk of Stanley's and Marion's; as she recognized it, and remembered how long must elapse before they should again stroll together, the tears rushed to her eyes. Vernon saw them, and not knowing what had caused them, began to talk of what he thought would interest her most, and said :

" I heard from Arthur this morning : he seems to be in better spirits, and very sanguine about his prospects. You must look brighter, now that he is more comfortable."

" I should not mind anything, if I could only see him. I begged mamma to ask him to dine with us, that I might say good-by to him, but she would not hear of it. I cannot endure leaving England without taking leave of him ; who knows whether we may ever meet again ?"

Poor Marion began to weep sadly, and Vernon's soothing seemed quite ineffectual, even when he suggested the possibility of his meeting her at Southampton.

"No, that cannot be, for I received a few farewell lines from him this morning, and that is all that will pass between us. But this is very foolish of me, Frederic, to tease you with my regrets, particularly when you are so kind as to burden yourself with me during your travels; but I assure you, I will not be such a disagreeable companion often; it was only the associations of this neighbourhood which recalled the past so vividly."

"Change of scene will do you good; and I am so glad to have you with us, that I shall be selfish enough to think this little interruption to your happiness is a fortunate thing for us. Here we are at the door. Now you must come and warm yourself, for you are nearly an icicle."

Adeline was soon busy disencumbering her

sister of her shawls and furs, and heaping up a huge fire to cheer her, talking rapidly of all her plans and hopes of pleasure for the winter. At last she rose to depart, saying:

“ When you wish to leave your room, dearest, go into the boudoir, it is so much warmer there than in the drawing-room. I will be with you soon, but some people are waiting for directions about certain alterations which are to be made while we are away. Don’t think of dressing for dinner, for although Fred likes one to attend to the toilette generally, he must put up with morning attire this evening, for all my things are packed, and half way to Southampton ere this, I expect.”

Marion soon followed Adeline’s advice, and repaired to the boudoir, where she found a blazing fire looking cheery and snug; without ringing for the lamp, she drew a low chair upon the rug, and sat down to indulge in a little dreamy meditation.

The firelight gleamed upon the rich folds of her black *moirée* dress, the gloom of which was relieved by the fairy-like lace of her collar and cuffs; her delicate complexion contrasted strongly with the dark hue of her drapery, and her fair curls fell on it in graceful profusion. She was looking thoughtfully on the ring which Stanley had placed on her finger as a pledge of his love, and could not repress the painful feelings of regret which the memories attached to it called forth.

All at once the door opened quickly, and Vernon appeared with an animated smile upon his lips, exclaiming :

“ Here is an unexpected visitor, Marion ; you must entertain him until Adeline comes down,” and with these words he vanished, and Stanley was in the room pressing Marion to his heart.

Inexpressible, unspeakable, is the happiness of such a meeting ; words seem dead and soulless, when applied to describe its heartfelt

delight. The bright firelight fell upon them as they stood together. After the first, long, silent embrace was over, still they did not speak, but Stanley's arm was yet round Marion, and her trembling hand in his, while his deep earnest eyes were gazing through hers, reading in the very depths of her soul, the love unchangeable which dwelt there. They had forgotten for those few blissful minutes that they had only met to part again; the soul cannot experience two all-powerful feelings at the same instant—such perfect, complete, all-sufficing happiness as Stanley and Marion had, when they knew they were once more together, precluded all else. But gradually the sad feeling that they must soon again be separated stole over them, and dimmed their joy. Stanley bent his head and pressed his lips on the fair clear brow of his plighted love, and said:

“How I have longed to see you, my darling! it has been so very painful to be deprived of your society; but from what you told me

in your dear, affectionate letters, I was afraid of involving you in greater annoyances by calling. You look pale, love ; I am afraid you have been fretting ?”

The tears suffused Marion’s eyes, but she strove to smile as she answered :

“ Only a little, Arthur. I try to think of the time when we shall be together again, but sometimes the past comes back so vividly, that I cannot help giving way ; but your hopeful letters comfort me so much.”

Just at this moment, Adeline’s voice was heard on the stairs, and she soon entered the room, and after welcoming Stanley, exclaimed :

“ Why did you not have candles ? After such a long parting, you ought to be glad to see one another again. Marion, you will never succeed in doing the honours for me ; pray ring the bell.”

But Stanley pleaded so earnestly in favour of the cosy comfort of firelight for chat, that

Adeline drew her chair round, and abandoned her enlightening ideas. Perhaps Stanley feared that if the room were in less obscurity, he should lose the fair hand which he still kept a close prisoner, and this might have made him so adverse to the advent of a lamp. Presently Captain Vernon came in, and sitting beside Marion, said :

“ Will you not give more credit to my prophecies in future, now that what I hinted to you this morning has been verified ? Marion was quite sceptical, Stanley, when I told her she might possibly catch a glimpse of you before we embarked.”

“ Why did you not tell me you expected Arthur, instead of only giving me such a very doubtful hint?”

“ Because if anything unforeseen had occurred to prevent his coming, you would have been so disappointed, and I only had a line from him this morning to promise me he would be here.”

“Come, Vernon, that is scarcely a fair version : you speak as if I had left it doubtful. Directly I knew it was arranged for Marion to come here, I wrote to ask your hospitality, for I could not bear the thought of your running away with her and not having just a parting look ; however, Marion knows that I would have done anything to have seen her, so I defy all your insinuation to the contrary.”

“My dear fellow, I insinuate nothing to your disadvantage, I have no wish to quarrel with one of my fair *compagnons de voyage*, before we start. Come, there is the dinner-bell, let us adjourn down stairs. I suppose you and I must go Darby and Joan fashion, Adeline,” added Vernon, offering his arm to his wife, for he divined that Stanley would not like to resign Marion even for a few minutes. It was a quiet party, for although it was great joy to be in each other’s society again, Stanley and Marion felt that

afterwards would come the parting—that *afterwards*, which looms upon us, even when we are happiest; and the knowledge that such feelings must be agitating their companions, restrained Vernon's and Adeline's usual animation.

Yet on the whole, it was an evening to which they would look back with satisfaction, for there was nothing harsh, nothing dissonant, to leave disagreeable impressions; and although Marion's eyes looked dim when Stanley filled his glass to Adeline's enjoyment of her trip, and her voice occasionally faltered, yet she appeared happy in comparison to what she had done lately. The ladies seemed reluctant to leave the dining-room, they lingered late there, in compliance with Stanley's wishes and pleading looks, and when they rose, it was with the promise of giving a speedy summons to coffee, which, when sent, was quickly obeyed, for Stanley considered every moment wasted which was passed away from Marion. They sat

talking together over the fragrant beverage, until Adeline begged her sister would go to the boudoir to give some orders about the direction of her luggage, which was about to be dispatched to Southampton. She had finished her commission, and was about to return to the drawing-room, when, after a low knock at the door, Stanley entered.

He sat beside her on the sofa, and said :

“I wanted to see you alone, dearest, so I availed myself of Adeline’s permission to invade her boudoir ; I had not time for a minute’s chat before dinner.”

“You must write very often to me, when I am away, Arthur, for I shall have nothing else to comfort me.”

“Indeed I will, my own love, but do not be unhappy should you not get the letters punctually, for I know those foreign post-offices are terribly irregular. You must send me long letters, for I shall be very lonely in my chambers.”

"I cannot bear to think of your long evenings, I am so afraid of your getting back to your old suspicions and misgivings, when you have no one to talk to about them. But dearest, you will never doubt me, will you? Never think I can change, pray, pray do not!"

"Never, darling. After all your kindness, and constancy, I should be a brute not to confide in you; but it will be a hard trial to be away from you so long!"

"Do not talk of our parting now, let us forget that to-night, at least."

"But, my dearest, do not you know that I shall not see you to-morrow, I must be in court very early in the morning. It is absolutely imperative, therefore I must leave here long before you will be visible, so that this will be our last interview. I thought you would rather say good-by when we were alone, therefore I followed you here."

Marion could not answer, for her tears

were choking her ; she endeavoured to repress them, to be calm, but the more Stanley soothed her, the quicker came the sobs, until she whispered, as he pressed her hand to his lips :

“ Do not, dearest, it only makes me worse, let me be quiet a minute, and I shall be better.”

He rose and stirred the fire, moved the candles, and when he heard the sobs cease, and saw she looked calmer, he again seated himself beside her, saying :

“ Pray do not be so unhappy, dearest love, or I shall be wretched. Think of the future, when we shall never be parted, but be always together to love and comfort each other ; and I hope it will not be very long before this happy time will come.”

“ But I shall not even see you for the next six months, think how long that is ; what shall I do without you ?”

“ You must write often to me, and think

how I am working and striving to get a happy home for us : you must take care of yourself for my sake."

"But it is so difficult to be cheerful when I never see you, Arthur ; if I could only hope for an hour's chat occasionally, it would be so different."

"You must look forward to our meeting, my love ; it *will* come, although it does seem a distant thing to think of ; you must use a little faith, as you used to tell me to do, and then you will not fret."

"If you are ill, or anything goes wrong, I shall know nothing of it for so long ! I shall always be in a state of anxiety."

"Nay, Marion, love, do not be mistrustful. Let us hope for the best ; and I promise you that by some means or other you shall always hear of me, if I should be unable to write myself."

The silvery tones of the French clock startled them, for it warned them of the lateness of the

hour. Marion looked pale and sad, and the tears kept falling on her cheeks. Stanley struggled earnestly for composure and firmness, but as he gazed upon the weeping girl beside him, and felt how inexpressibly dear she was to him, his heart throbbed painfully, and his deep low voice trembled as he whispered his love. His arm was round her ; he laid her aching head upon his shoulder, as a mother would soothe a suffering child. Poor girl ! in her sorrow, she scarcely knew where she was, or what she did ; she only felt he was near her, and that was a consolation.

At last she felt a scalding tear drop on her hand, and striving to calm herself she whispered :

“ Dear, dear Arthur, you will not forget me ? ”

“ Forget you, my own ! impossible ; do not think of such a thing.”

Marion raised her head ; she knew they must part ; she looked at her watch, and then

at him. The tenderness of that steadfast glance told him that their interview must end ; he saw that she could not tell him this, but she knew he understood it. One long, lingering, passionate, tearful embrace, a whispered farewell, a mutual pressure of the hand, which vibrated to the heart, and they had parted. Stanley did not turn to look at her again, but left the room, with that last, speechless, entreating, agonized glance impressed on his heart to haunt him wherever he went. Marion sank on the sofa ; and now as she wept alone, felt how much more bitter her tears were when there was no tender hand to assuage them, no soothing voice to comfort her. Long and sadly did she weep, until at last she went to her own room, and from mere exhaustion and weariness fell into a restless slumber.

CHAPTER VII.

We shall not all be similar. The scale
Of being is a graduated thing ;
And deeper than the vanities of power,
Or the vain pomps of glory, there is writ
Gradations in its hidden characters.

The depth
Of glory in the attributes of God
Will measure the capacities of mind ;
And as the angels differ, will the ken
Of gifted spirits glorify him more.

N. P. WILLIS.

BEFORE daylight the next morning, Stanley
was ready to depart ; he paused an instant

before Marion's door, breathing an earnest prayer for her safety and happiness. The bitterness of parting he now felt, when he could not see her ; and as he turned towards the stairs, the strong man's lip was quivering with emotion. Marion heard his step across the hall ; and throwing a dressing-gown round her, she went to the window to endeavour to catch a parting glance through the dusky twilight. She heard the sound of the horse's hoofs pawing the frosty ground, she saw Stanley mount ; and before he turned away, he looked up at her window, and just discerning the faint outline of her figure, he waved a farewell. She gave an answering salute ; and he was gone !

That pale, shadowy form in the gloomy obscurity seemed to Stanley like the guardian-angel of his troubled life, the irradiating influence of his stormy heart, like the moon's faint, pure light in a sky of lowering clouds. That parting glimpse was a source of comfort

and consolation to him as he galloped off, a kind of repeated assurance of her love, almost an augury of her faith and constancy. The memory of their interview the preceding evening was vividly before him ; his heart throbbed rapidly when he thought of their tender embrace, of their last kiss, of his passionate, absorbing love, of all her sweetness and gentle affection ; he still heard her sobs, still felt her tears upon his cheek, until the knowledge that he had parted with her nearly maddened him. With these thoughts agitating him, he found himself on the hill from whence he could distinguish Langston through the mists, which the rising sun was now dispersing. Most willingly would he have avoided seeing his old house, the pain of losing it was still too recent for him to arouse it without fear and hesitation, yet he could not refrain himself from reining in his horse to take a lingering glance of the scene so dear to him. All looked the same as when he had last seen it, excepting that the

foliage was gone, and the bare boughs of the fine old avenues looked desolate and gloomy, instead of rich and beautiful in their luxuriance. Could he still have called that landscape his own, he would not now have been riding swiftly away from her he loved, he would not have months of stern, unceasing labour to anticipate, uncheered by sympathy, unblessed by the sight of her whose image was woven with his very heart-strings.

It is impossible to describe the bitterness, the almost harshness of Stanley's feelings as he gazed upon his lost inheritance. Why—*why* should it be? why should he have been called to such a struggle? why have had such a burden imposed upon him? Alas! alas! for man when such questions suggest themselves to him! When the proud heart swells with a sense of rebellious doubt of the justice of its trials, and would fain choose its own mode of discipline; when it doubts the wisdom and goodness which dispenses all events, and rules

all circumstances ; verily, then has evil its hour of triumph, and the heavenly robe of Sorrow is transformed into the darkly-stained, soul-depressing mantle of Despair ! Stanley's brow grew dark, and his lips compressed while he paused on the hill, for it was a scene of bitterness to him ; and when he turned away, and resumed his journey, cold, gloomy thoughts of his destiny were overwhelming him. Oh ! fortunate was it for him that the gentle pinions of Love had unfolded themselves over that heart, where dwelt yet dormant, stormy, surging passions, and the capabilities of much power, either for good or evil ; that its purifying, enlightening influence had penetrated before he had been subjected to misfortune ; that his soul could bathe in its soothing waters, and learn that the true love of woman surpasses all consideration of worldly and ignoble aims, and can only exist in an atmosphere of purity and self-devotion.

Now, while deep regret and busy questionings

of the permitted power of evil were raging in his heart ; when life bore a lurid hue of gloom and suffering ; when its waves were surging under the storm-winds of crushed hopes and maddening disappointment, the thought that one kind devoted being clung to him, lived only for him, and would be true through all circumstances and all obstacles, arose like an angel with healing on its wings, soothing and calming his hurt and lacerated feelings, until life's course had a better goal than worldly success, and a purer balm than gratified desires.

Stanley remembered the time when power had seemed to be the sole object in life ; when his struggles, his hopes, his aim, had all been exerted for the attainment of this same power. Power of intellect, power of position, power of influence, these alone had appeared worthy to battle for. To rise to that eminence where stood men, to whom he had looked up with almost veneration ; to be respected, considered, revered, for the power of his intellect, and for

what his intellect had gained ; this had been his determined desire. He had thought that when he could no longer command this position, when age or infirmities should have subdued his energies, or when, in the natural course of things, he must give way before the noonday ardour of another generation, that then life would be valueless and existence a burden. He had fancied nothing could compensate for the excitement of ambition, for the intoxication of success, or the gratification of triumph. It is true that a feeling of the want of something more than this had occasionally crept over him. In moments of weariness, he had wanted sympathy, some softening influence ; he had longed, ah ! intensely too, for something holier, purer, gentler than ambition, yet not as a compensation for it, not as a substitute, but more as an occasional relief, as a species of relaxation, as an anodyne for worldly vexation.

But now, life had gained nobler objects and a higher significance ; it was not only in the

consummation of desires, in the success of endeavours, that happiness lay ; the inner spirit of existence had declared itself, the brightness of love had shone forth, and cast a steady enduring light, not only over life, but over the dark chasm of death, and the trackless waste of eternity. Yes, thrice blessed are the effects of a *real*, true, disinterested love ! It is the one regenerating influence in this world of selfishness and mockeries ; the fructifying, strengthening, purifying, spiritualising essence, which overcomes the material, and elevates the soul to its proper destiny.

Of all *shows*, of all mockeries, of all imitations, the simulation of affection is the deadliest, the most fatal in its results.

All moral force is lost, when the love which endureth all things is wanting ; all moral fortitude is gone, when the love which beareth all things fails ; all moral faith has vanished, when the love which believeth all things sinks ; all moral health has disappeared, when the love

which hopeth all things is fallen. Yes, the soul that has not love is dead—dead to all improvement, lost to all good. If love be such a strong reality, such an all-powerful truth, is it not most dangerous to trifle with it, to treat it, as, alas! too many do, as an amusement, almost a jest? Can it be right to simulate it; to make it a cloak, a vehicle for worldly schemes, for selfish aims? of all evils this must be the greatest, the root of untold unimaginable distress.

Fortunately Stanley was saved from this misery. In the hour of his sorrow, when his disappointment and regret for worldly losses were most poignant, his love for Marion, his appreciation and worship of the good and beautiful in her character, saved him from despair, and cast its blessing upon his heart, as he galloped on, leaving his paternal home fading away, until it was lost in the hazy dimness of distance.

Marion had gazed from her window until the thick twilight had entirely hidden Stanley from

her sight, then with her eyes blinded with tears, she had laid her head again on the pillow, but not to sleep. While she watched the grey shadows depart, and the light of day steal gradually on, she thought seriously ; and although her cheek was still wet with the tears of parting, she strove to strengthen herself to bear absence, and secure in the full certainty of Stanley's unchanging love, to rest uncomplainingly in the hope of their meeting. Sad though their parting had been, the memory of it was inexpressibly comforting to Marion ; had she left England without having seen him, she would always have been regretting it, and restless and unhappy from the sense of neglect ; now she could think of all his tenderness and affection, and hoped that he would never doubt hers. Her poor heart had been longing for a little love and sympathy, and Stanley's looks and words had been replete with these ; no wonder that a sense of consolation, of security and of peace, had succeeded the anxiety and disappointment which

had overwhelmed her. Although a gentle shadow was on her brow when she met Adeline and Vernon at breakfast, it was a far preferable expression to the cold, immovable look her features had lately worn, which had spoken of deep feelings strongly repressed. Now, although sorrow was in her heart, it was not without hope, it was sweetened and soothed by Stanley's tenderness, she could enter cheefully into Adeline's employments and preparations for their journey, and participate in her anticipations of pleasure, with less effort than before.

The sun shone brightly when they drove away from Fountain Court, the road sparkled as if inlaid with diamonds, the sky was clear as summer, although not of such a deep-toned blue, a few fleecy clouds floated about, like fairy islands in the azure sea. It is curious to watch the changing beauties of cloud-land! There one sees mountains, trees, rocks, islands, gigantic animals, images of men—all that strikes our sight here, is repeated above, only extended,

enlarged, ten thousand times more glorious, more beautiful. If one thinks of this, it seems almost like a type of the regenerating, beatifying influence of heaven, which will not absolutely change our individual characters, but purify, enlighten, and glorify them. People too generally do not think of this, they fancy that death has some mysterious transmuting power, that when we awake in eternity we shall find our beings miraculously altered, that something will be added which we never had before ; but this will not be—we shall discover that as we have formed our characters, so will they remain ; exalted, ennobled, purified, it is true ; yet with the same stamp, the same impress of individuality. Otherwise, what can be the object of raising the intellect, of extending the mental powers of men, if the child and the full matured and cultivated man have both the same standard, the same place in the great Hereafter ? There will be, there must be, gradations in heaven, as there are on earth—we

know the angels differ—to rise higher and higher in the scale of being, is not this an ambition worthy of immortal souls? The idea that our superiority in character will only gain us worldly honours, and worldly distinctions, will only give us the ascendancy over inanity and mediocrity on earth, is one from which a man who thinks at all seriously will revolt; what, shall all struggles for the good, all aspirations for the elevated, all desires for the holy, all victories over the weakness, the sin of our natures, be as nothing? Will the soul which has passed through a stern discipline, and has strengthened and raised its being, find itself only equal to the feeble, the inert, the careless children of mortality? This is a doctrine which cannot be repudiated, crushed and annihilated too quickly, if man is to do his work here, with an adequate object, a worthy aim.

Marion gazed at the sky, and felt the influence of its loveliness enter her heart. It would be useless to describe the rapid transit to

Southampton, where the travellers arrived before the short winter day was quite gone, before the sun had quite vanished in the bank of clouds in the western sky. They soon hurried to the steamer, and took refuge in the cabin, being glad to escape from the cold air, and from the sights and sounds of the deck. However, when they were fairly on the wide sea, and the stars had shone out, like innumerable spirit-eyes gazing upon the world from mysterious heights, Marion muffled herself in her fur cloak, and accompanied Captain Vernon upon deck to enjoy the novelty of the scene, and the clearness of the night-air. As she paced in silence by his side, while he indulged in a cigar, she was musing upon her position. A few months ago, and who could have foreseen the possibility of her leaving England? and yet here she was, being rapidly borne from its shores. The inevitable circling net of circumstances, who can explain its mystery?

We must pass over the details of the voyage,

which was completed without any peculiar adventures or occurrences, and avoid any account of the journey. Now that such tours are so frequently made, they are familiar to almost every one, either by personal experience or by repeated descriptions, so that but little interest can be elicited from them. Neither Adeline nor Marion had ever been out of England before, so that every object had the charm of novelty, and every hour brought fresh sources of amusement for them.

Captain Vernon was an invaluable cicerone, never wearied, never wearisome; he perhaps enjoyed himself more than either of the trio, for it was unfeigned pleasure to him to see his beautiful wife's countenance beaming with animation, to know she was interested and happy, and the intelligence and charms of Marion's conversation had never struck him so forcibly before: he was certainly very agreeably situated; two such companions in such a lovely country as Italy; he might well be in

almost unbounded spirits, in a continued flood of exhilaration.

They had determined to make Naples their first resting-place, and journeyed thither without any unnecessary delay. When they first saw its excessive loveliness expanded before them, they were delighted it was to be their home, for a brief period at all events. That exquisitely beautiful Bay of Naples, with the bright blue sea, and the still brighter blue sky above it, with all the pellucid charms and brilliancy which pervades everything, was before them. Cheerfulness, gaiety, thoughtlessness, seem to be the distinctions of this place, its own peculiar characteristics, differing from the aristocratic pride and elegance of Ducal Florence, and also from the gloomy grandeur of the time-honoured interest, the old-world associations of Imperial Rome.

CHAPTER VIII.

Where'er an evil passion is subdued,
Or virtue's feeble embers fanned, where'er
A sin is heartily abjured and left,
There is a high and holy place, a spot
Of sacred light, a most religious fane,
Where happiness descending sits and smiles.

POLLOK.

EXQUISITELY lovely as the scenery about Naples was, it by no means coincided with Adeline's ideas to do nothing more than saunter about to admire it; she was eager to enter into society, and as they had very good introductions, she soon found herself in a very gay circle.

The unrestrained sociability, the increased familiarity of manners in continental intercourse have great charms for any one with Adeline's vivacity. She was excessively admired by all, and *fêted* continually ; the excitement of such a life suited her exactly, and never had she appeared more radiant in loveliness, or more fascinating in her style than at this time. She never left her hotel without being joined by numerous cavaliers, all anxious for one of her beaming smiles or earnest glances. No ball was considered complete unless Mrs. Vernon's presence graced it ; nothing could be arranged in the fashionable world without her concurrence ; never had any one created such a *furore* ; the name of *la belle Anglaise* was on every one's lips ; she was the recognized type of beauty, and the reigning fashion in all things.

Thus it was at Naples, and when they went to Florence, the scene was continued. Adeline seemed to have taken the impulsive, enthusiastic

Italians completely by storm ; all admitted her superiority, and as she moved among the olive-tinted, coal-black-eyed daughters of the South, it was almost as if a Juno had descended from Olympus to eclipse the merely mortal beauty of earth. When Marion entered a ball-room beside her imperial-looking sister, she was like an attendant spirit of purity and peace ; her faint, floating drapery, and halo of golden hair contrasting with the brilliant costumes and Oriental loveliness of Mrs. Vernon.

Captain Vernon generally accompanied his wife into society, but soon found more amusement in remaining in the saloon, where cards and gambling were going on, than in joining the dancers ; not that he personally indulged in the excitement of play, except by an occasional bet, but it prevented his being fully aware of the dangerous popularity Adeline was acquiring. He knew she was admired—he saw that expressed in a thousand ways—but with the delusive weakness of some vain men,

his self-love was flattered by his wife receiving the applause and homage of the world.

Short-sighted selfishness, to plunge a woman into such a vortex, merely to gratify the paltry vanity of man, and worse than a fallacy to imagine she will emerge from its bewildering influence without its leaving an evil impress upon her mind. Marion was the only one who seemed to perceive at all the false position in which Mrs. Vernon was placing herself. As she sat tranquilly in some quiet corner, shrinking from the heartless gaiety around her, as she often did, indulging in reveries and fancies of Stanley, she could notice Adeline's manner and bearing, and a sigh would often escape her, when she saw the career she was pursuing; not that there was anything in particular for which she could blame her—she was not more marked in her graciousness to one than to another—but there was a something which to Marion's refined taste and correct ideas seemed not quite as it should be. She scarcely knew why, but

she felt uncomfortable at the constant whirl of excitement in which Adeline moved—at a certain manner of accepting admiration which she had adopted—at a coquetish air which pervaded every movement; all this was painful and annoying to Marion, who was so completely the reverse. She appeared a complete personification of the cold, impassive English-woman to the fiery and demonstrative Italians; and although her style of beauty was much admired by many, her chilling reserve and perfect calmness prevented her society being generally sought for. All crowded round the brilliant and fascinating Adeline, whose every word was listened to with that deference which is accorded to excessive beauty, and which is so flattering to it. But no woman can seek such homage, and voluntarily become the centre of attraction, without sacrificing something of the delicacy and purity of her mind and feelings.

Marion felt this more especially one night,

when they were at a ball at the Grand Duke's, where Adeline was the queen of the evening. She had been sitting near her, beside a matronly Italian lady, who had taken a great fancy to the gentle and almost sad-looking girl, and who always kept a place for her, when her sister's crowd of admirers prevented her receiving that countenance which, as her *chaperone*, she should have found from her. Marion had realised that the most painful solitude may be found in a crowd, and had always felt grateful for the kind friendship this lady had shown her. Now while she was sitting beside the Contessa, some gentleman accosted the latter; and not knowing who Marion was, commented rather severely upon the very decided flirtation the beautiful Mrs. Vernon was carrying on with the Marquis d'Azzi. A glance from the Contessa silenced her friend, but not before Marion had heard his remark. She looked at Adeline, and could not wonder at observation being excited.

She was sitting on a low ottoman in a kind of recess at one end of the room, behind which rich draperies hung ; her dark hair was braided, and a brilliant *bandeau* of gems encircled her head; her exquisitely moulded arms, which were in constant movement with her fan, contrasted well with the dark velvet of her dress, and her splendid figure, scarcely shrouded in the drooping folds of the antique lace which she wore, struck every eye. The Marquis d'Azzi was beside her, with his earnest eyes fixed on hers, with too-evident admiration ; she was chatting with apparent carelessness, but yet in no way discouraging his attentions. It was not quite a *tête-à-tête*, for one or two other young men were lounging near, anxious to join in the conversation ; and with inimitable ease and grace she occasionally referred to one or the other of them, just keeping them in her train, without dismissing the Marquis. Marion turned away with a sigh, and another picture rose before her—Adeline's wedding morning, and

the solemn vows she had heard her repeat, to “love and honour” until death, one who was still near her, but who was at the present moment forgotten for the flatteries and attentions of a comparative stranger.

Oh! the incalculable evils of such carelessness as Vernon showed; content that his wife was amused and satisfied, he went his own way, and left her to please herself, and yet loving her, as he accounted love, all the time! While she was following the caprice of the moment, and indulging in folly and vanity, subjecting herself to the censures of the wise and experienced, he only looked to see if her lips wore a smile, and her eyes their radiance; better far if they had been veiled in thought, or even dim with sorrow, than beaming with the fatal love of excitement. He had no reason to doubt her affection, for she was always pleased to be in his society; but they were seldom quietly together, and in company the attentions of a husband are not often called forth.

When they were descending the stairs to reach their carriage after the ball, Marion overheard the Marquis petition Adeline to be allowed to form one of her escort the following day to one of the galleries of pictures, where they had all arranged to spend a few hours ; his manner particularly displeased Marion, and even Vernon called him a conceited puppy as they drove off. Marion determined to make an effort to call Adeline's attention to her position, to show her the evil that must ensue from her present proceedings, notwithstanding the reluctance she ever felt to speak of such subjects to her sister, who, since her marriage, had been completely accustomed to act according to her own fancies. However, the next morning, the sisters were sitting together, and Marion thought it was a good opportunity to give a few words of advice ; but she hesitated long before she could speak, for in blaming those she loved Marion was terribly timid.

Adeline was at the piano, and after playing over a valse, she came to the fire, near which Marion was sitting, and said :

“What a lovely valse that is ; I never danced to it before last night. Good music is certainly indispensable to the enjoyment of dancing ; without it, even a good partner is of little avail.”

“You danced very frequently last night, I think. Are you not very tired this morning ?”

“Not particularly, I did not dance so much as usual ; I was chatting to the Marquis d’Azzi, he is most amusing.”

“So I imagined you found him, or you would not have permitted him to keep in such very close attendance.”

“Did you remark that, Marion ? You are very observant.”

“I could not avoid it, when he scarcely left you ; for when you were dancing, or talking to any one else, he was like your shadow,

ever ready to join in the conversation, to bring you an ice, or to carry your *bouquet*; I do not think he danced with any one but you."

Adeline looked annoyed at these words, and replied coldly:

"Really, one would think that Frederic had bribed you to read me a lecture this morning. How can I help the Marquis not dancing? no one can blame me for that."

"Excuse me, dearest, but I heard several remarks about his undivided attentions; indeed you must be more careful, and not give people reason to believe you are coqueting."

"Nonsense, what have I done to raise this attack? Look how Lady Charlotte flirts with that Count Sarona; Mrs. Fraser, again; if I acted as they do, you might complain."

"I hope most sincerely, Adeline, that you will never approach their manners: it is but a proof of the weakness of your cause if, as a defence, you can quote such people as being worse than you are—people whom no

one can countenance. If foreign customs acquiesce in such manners, that is no reason for our adopting them. You may depend upon it, the Marquis is an unprincipled man. What right had he to take the myrtle from your *bouquet*, last night, and place it in his coat? What right had he to compromise you by appearing to make an appointment for to-day?"

Adeline's cheek flushed, but it was with anger, as she replied :

"If Frederic makes no comment, and does not find fault with me I do not see any occasion for you to do so."

"If he were to see you as constantly as I do, are you sure that he would not be annoyed? Is it not his ignorance that makes him silent? The few minutes that he saw you and the Marquis together last night, called forth no complimentary epithets from him. Would he be more indulgent were he better acquainted with him?"

“He knows how to make allowances for the difference of foreign manners, which you do not, and would not make all this fuss.”

“Now do not be angry with me, dear Adeline, let me tell you what I think, as I have always done. Believe me, if Frederic had heard the remarks I did last night he would have felt excessively angry and hurt. He loves you, and you know it; do be generous, and true to your own better feelings; do not be drawn into a flirtation with any one: you know how wrong it is, it is mere love of excitement and admiration which is leading you astray now. Do not let Frederic have any reason to be annoyed as he assuredly will be if you pass another evening as you did yesterday.”

“But what am I to do? I can’t help the Marquis admiring me, as he says he does: that is no fault of mine.”

“Now, dearest, do not be childish, you very well know what I mean; if he were a disagreeable person in manners and appearance,

you would soon let him know that, however much he might admire you, he must not express it. You have no difficulty in showing people their attentions are disagreeable to you."

"But he will never listen to me: I cannot make him different."

"It will be more difficult perhaps, now that you have allowed him to speak of his own feelings with regard to you; the very fact of having listened to his compliments and flattery, has partially placed you in his power, but do not add to this; the next interview you have with him, make him understand his proper position towards you, no scene, no words are necessary—talking on such subjects is worse than useless; your manner alone will convince him, that his attentions annoy you. He may accuse you of caprice, but that is far preferable to your husband's expressing any dissatisfaction with your conduct."

“ I will think about it. If you think Fred will be angry, I will never dance with the Marquis again, for of course I do not care a straw for him ; but when you are constantly in the society of an agreeable man, who evidently admires you, it is very difficult to refrain from talking to him.”

“ Difficult perhaps, but in some cases imperative, dearest Adeline. Do not think me unkind or tiresome for mentioning this subject to you, but you always used to listen to me, and I could not delay speaking, when I saw how carelessly you were acting.”

Adeline kissed her sister, and returned to the piano, resolving at that moment to attend to her advice : but as Marion sat by the fire, glancing occasionally at her countenance, she could not help a feeling of regret stealing over her, for she knew how impulsive and easily led Adeline was, how incapable of resisting temptation, how impressed by external circumstances. She felt convinced that even if Adeline avoided

the present difficulties, ere long similar snares would surround her ; for she did not look upon life as a fateful, all-important battle-field, where either victory or defeat is inevitable, where neutrality is an impossibility, but as a garden of flowers, where the only obligation was to select the most attractive blossoms, careless of the secret thorns which might lurk beneath the sweet petals. Marion wished that Captain Vernon would look upon his responsibilities with more serious consideration ; that he would think less of his wife's amusement, and more of her duties ; that he would recognise the obligation which was upon him to protect her from evil, even from herself ; and that he would invest life with more earnestness, more reality than he did.

This winter in Italy, which Adeline had anticipated with such eager delight, and which she was passing as if in an atmosphere of unceasing light, was anything but a good discipline for her, she had scarcely any ap-

parent duties, at least none which forced themselves upon her ; and she went on as if she had the right to regard pleasure and amusement only, as if she were exempt from the toil and sorrow which are the attendant conditions of mortality. Marion had been subjected to a trial which had awakened her to the real aspect of things, which by making her feel acutely, had aroused her sympathies, and shown her that existence has a higher obligation than self-gratification and a more enduring influence than pleasure.

When they started for the picture gallery, Vernon accompanied them, and as Adeline was on his arm, the Marquis d'Azzi who joined the party, soon found that his exclusive attentions and devoted admiration were rather out of place ; he could not understand why Adeline clung so closely to her husband, and seemed so careless of him, so different to what he had flattered himself he should have found her. But far from attributing her change

of conduct to any recognition of right, he merely considered her another example of feminine caprice and fickleness, and took leave of her, trusting that another day would bring a change to her fancy.

Fortunately for Adeline, the time they had arranged to pass at Florence was nearly at an end; the few days they remained there, she maintained a reserve of manner which d'Azzi did not venture to invade; and when they were established in Rome, Marion breathed more freely, knowing that an interruption had taken place in an acquaintance which could never be productive of agreeable or salutary results.

CHAPTER IX.

Continuance of passive pleasure, it should never be forgotten, is, under all conditions of mortal existence, an impossibility. Everywhere in life the true question is, not what we *gain*, but what we *do*.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

I cannot forget thee, thy smile haunts me yet,
And thy dark earnest eyes bright as when we first met,
Thy gay laugh returns in the silence of sleep,
And I start from my slumbers to listen and weep.

T. H. BAYLEY.

THE Vernons found several pleasant English families at Rome, with whom they became acquainted, which was more agreeable than

keeping such almost exclusively foreign society as they had done at Naples and Florence.

It is astonishing how soon intimacies spring up when people meet abroad ; it seems so natural for those of one country to cling together, when they are surrounded by strangers and strange associations. Often when such friends meet again in England they soon drop this familiarity, and even their acquaintance, which proves strongly that they suited so well in consequence of circumstances, not from inherent qualities.

Among the gentlemen who had been introduced to the Vernons, was Sir Charles Seymour, a young Baronet of good property, who was lounging away his time on the continent, as so many people do, until the return of spring re-assembles them in the gay haunts of London. He appeared quite delighted with his new friends, the Vernons, and was constantly in their society. He and the Captain suited admirably, they had many mutual acquaintances and many

similar tastes, so that they never were in want of subjects for conversation. Then Sir Charles was a great musician, and was delighted to find how admirably Mrs. Vernon accompanied his *cornet-à-piston* on the piano ; there was always some very good reason for his joining them in their walks and rides, or for dropping in of an evening. He was very much pleased with Marion's appearance ; her completely English style quite charmed him, when compared with the foreigners, with whom he had lately associated ; and her calm, reserved manners, and the total absence of anything like effort to attract attention, won his esteem ; for being in an excellent position, he was wearied by the complete *set* that was made at him by the ladies, either for themselves or their daughters. He felt so entirely free from all manœuvres when he was with the Vernons, that he quite domiciled himself there, and daily became more fascinated by Marion's character, even the gentle sadness on her brow and her faint smile became dear

to him, although he secretly wished occasionally for a little more animation when he was addressing her. He fancied she was timid, and was careful not to arouse her sensitiveness by any demonstrations of marked attentions, but met her on the same friendly terms which she maintained towards him.

He flattered himself that in time he should be able to win something more satisfactory than the cold *retenue* with which she received him, and to discover a certain interest arising for him, which he considered he had a power to gain. Had he known how very little he occupied Marion's thoughts, and what a mere trifle he was in her estimation, he might have paused in his imaginations and hopes. But he found Mrs. Vernon so ready to meet his friendly advances, and the Captain equally willing to promote the intercourse between them, that he did not reflect much upon the equable uniformity of Marion's deportment, and continued to accompany them in their visits to the galleries and ruins, and all

that was interesting in Rome. He was a clever and amusing man, a perfect gentleman in manners and feelings, and consequently a very desirable companion for such expeditions as they made. Marion was very much entertained and amused during their stay at Rome : it had long been one of her greatest wishes to find herself there, and her anticipations were fully realized ; she saw everything under the most advantageous circumstances, in the company of people of taste and intellect, and was free at all events from petty annoyances, or any fresh source of sorrow. Stanley's letters were frequent, most affectionate and hopeful ; had she not been separated from him, she would have greatly enjoyed herself at Rome.

Sir Charles Seymour exerted himself most strenuously to interest and amuse her, but with such total absence of any of the exclusive attention of one endeavouring to gain her particular regard, that she never thought of him but as a kind and obliging friend ; and as such began slightly

to relax from her cold reserve. She took it for granted that he had heard of her engagement either from Adeline or Vernon, and therefore did not attribute his constant attendance as intended especially for her. Adeline had some idea of all this, but was determined not to interfere in the least degree ; she had been very much opposed to Marion's maintaining her engagement with Stanley, for she thought it was useless to expect his circumstances would improve for years, and regretted that her sister should throw away her prospects by waiting for him. Now that she saw Sir Charles was fascinated by her, and knowing the advantages of his position, she was by no means inclined to discourage his attentions, indulging a vague hope that something might occur to change Marion's determination.

Nothing can be more ruinous in its consequences than such conduct as Adeline's. She soon discerned the real cause of Sir Charles's visits, but instead of acting openly and kindly

towards him, she allowed him to retain a false impression of Marion's position, and carefully prevented his awakening her to the right appreciation of his sentiments, anxious only to keep them together, that by some means, quite unknown or unguessed at by herself, her own hopes and views might be realized. She never thought of the selfishness of encouraging him in an affection which must be hopeless, or of the want of principle involved in tempting Marion from her faith to Stanley; she forgot what difficulties and distress might ensue if Arthur ever heard of the assiduous attentions Marion was receiving from another. She totally disregarded all this, and recklessly carried forward her own plans. Therefore, day after day, Sir Charles Seymour might be found in the Vernons' drawing-room, chatting to the Captain or to Adeline, and gazing from time to time upon Marion, who was always occupied with her pencil or work, unless indeed she was at her desk. She never allowed Sir Charles's

entrance to interrupt her letters, and if he chanced to make a comment upon her constant correspondence, the gentle blush only made him more ready to repeat his remarks, that he might admire the additional expression which her raised colour gave to her countenance.

Sir Charles's acquaintance began to consider his doom was fixed, naturally enough, when he was so unremitting in his attentions to the Vernons; he began, however, to be rather wearied of not making more progress in the regard of the fair lady herself, and even the charms of Mrs. Vernon, which certainly made her house most agreeable, did not prevent his wishing for a little more appearance of reciprocity to his feelings than he met with. Had it not been for the idea which Adeline had instilled into his mind by some indirect means—for he could never tell how it came there—that Marion would inevitably shrink from any manifestations of particular regard from a comparatively new acquaintance, he would have

sooner shown his admiration; but fearful of injuring his cause by too much demonstration, he remained very quiescent, although most unwillingly.

Adeline contrived to keep him in good humour, and to prevent Marion's having any suspicions of her manœuvres for some time, by those inexplicable means which some women seem to possess, by which they make people and circumstances their slaves. But she began to get uneasy, for she saw that Sir Charles would not long remain on the terms he now maintained; and there was no change between Marion and Stanley, absence did not produce any weakening effect upon their affection; and Adeline almost regretted that she had allowed Sir Charles to be deceived, by not owning to him that Marion was engaged.

“ Oh! what a tangled web we weave,
When first we labour to deceive.”

Marion's thoughts were so entirely devoted

to Stanley ; in imagination she had never been untrue to her faith ; so that the possibility of Sir Charles's pretensions as a lover had never occurred to her. Adeline seemed resolved to have some one in attendance upon her, and although Sir Charles conversed much with her, there was not that indescribable something in his manner which had annoyed and displeased her in the Marquis d'Azzi ; besides which, he was very friendly with Captain Vernon, so that Marion began insensibly to regard him much as she had done Mr. Murray in England. But trifles at last began to arouse her from this state of ignorance ; she fancied Sir Charles had ventured to press her hand one night in assisting her into the carriage, and his style of accosting her now seemed changed, it appeared more demonstrative. Her manner, which he fancied had become less reserved, instantly returned to its former impassive dignity ; there was something about her which utterly prevented his advancing ; but this only added to the

interest he felt in her, and increased his wish to overcome her indifference. But the more decidedly did he manifest his admiration, the more determined was Marion to repel him ; but while Mrs. Vernon persevered in her tactics of misrepresenting the facts to Sir Charles, poor Marion had but little chance of convincing him of her sincerity.

Some men are unable to understand the possibility of a woman's withstanding their continued attentions, and perhaps, with the feeble and weak-minded, they may succeed in winning some feeling by such importunities ; but what a miserable compensation for the free, spontaneous feeling of the heart !

But Sir Charles Seymour was more to be pitied than blamed for the conduct he pursued towards Marion ; he could appreciate her character ; her retiring modesty and purity of principle had completed the spell which her personal appearance had first thrown round him. The entire absence of all manœuvring,

the transparent sincerity of her mind, had irresistible charms for him, who had mixed in the world from a very early age; he was completely entranced by her, and from being so constantly with her, learnt at last to love her devotedly. Mrs. Vernon had done him a cruel injury by encouraging his attentions and promoting his intercourse with her sister, never hinting that her affections were not free to be given to any one.

When his manner gave Marion reason to believe that he felt an interest in her, she endeavoured by every means to show him her perfect indifference; but a man is slow to believe against his will, and his vanity is always a powerful ally in his own favour. Marion avoided one or two walks, and declined several evening engagements, in the hope that if she were Sir Charles's object, he would give up his pursuit; but it was in vain, and she felt very uneasy at the slightest appearance of receiving attentions from any one, for she knew how Stanley would

resent such a thing ; and with her devoted love for him, she shrunk from the thought of any one else regarding her as he did. Her natural kindness of heart made her anxious to avoid entangling any one in hopes which she could never realise. She hesitated long before she could decide upon what course to pursue ; her manners already were as repulsive as they could be without absolute rudeness, and it was difficult to be constantly with such an amusing, winning person as Sir Charles was, without according him the common interest which society demands. He had never by words hinted what his looks seemed plainly to intimate, or Marion would have confided the secret of her engagement to his honour. She longed to do this, to spare him further annoyance ; but how could she reject what had never been offered ? Her delicacy of mind made her shrink from a voluntary explanation, and yet to continue the present state of things was an impossibility.

The only practicable plan was to apply to Adeline, that by some casual remark she might let him understand how her sister was circumstanced ; but Adeline's arrangements were such, that a private conversation with her was most difficult to obtain. However, when Marion had decided what was right, she was not one to allow trifling events to mar the execution of it ; and after waiting for the dismissal of a milliner, and postponing a drive, she found herself *tête-à-tête* with Adeline, in her dressing-room. But if she had expected to derive any assistance from her, any escape from her perplexity, she was disappointed ; for to all her earnest representations, Adeline only opposed light laughter, and affected incredulity, accusing her sister of discovering attentions which were never meant, and of being needlessly careful of Sir Charles's peace of mind. However painful such taunts might be, Marion did not allow them to prevent her stating to Adeline her wishes, and of particularly re-

questing her to make him acquainted with her engagement, before he added to her annoyance by any continuance of his assiduities. Marion's repeated entreaties at last had some effect upon Adeline, and she half promised to do as she wished, the first opportunity she could find.

They expected to meet Sir Charles at a ball the very evening Marion had this conversation with Adeline, therefore she hoped that then he might understand how she was circumstanced, even if he did not call in the course of the day. This he did not do, for he and Captain Vernon rode some miles out of Rome, and did not return until late, therefore Marion knew he could not meet Mrs. Vernon before the ball. She was anxious for the explanation to be over as soon as possible, that she might be relieved from his attendance in public, which annoyed her, and she felt sure that when he was aware of her engagement, he would cease to persecute her.

How often people suffer from the evils which

ensue from the want of judgment and principle of those who should be most eager to assist them ! The most trifling evasions of duty bring their heavy consequences, even a hesitation between right and wrong will cause incalculable evil ; how much greater then must be the effects of such deception as Adeline had practised ! And, alas ! for the weakness and short-sightedness of mortals, who can foresee to what extent the dark clouds may increase, which arise from the indulgence of a fault ! Farther and farther spread the magic circles of circumstances, involving wave after wave on the ocean of life, sweeping on until the far distance is included in their all-powerful whirlpool ; and then who shall arrest the course of events ? who shall raise a voice which shall command them to stay ? who can prevent the ever-rushing, inevitable tide of consequences and effects flowing to its highest mark ?

Such considerations should make us pause,

and reflect what work we are doing, for though the feeblest and most careless may *do*, who shall *undo*? Though a child may speak the word, who shall still the echo? Nothing is lost, nothing is unimportant, all goes on into the vast depths of eternity, working its destiny and fulfilling its career; and until the chaos of the future be unrolled, no one shall trace the power and value of what, to our finite understandings, may seem a trifle or an insignificance.

CHAPTER X.

Wert thou but mine! Oh! could
My voice some tone persuasive take,
And in thy breast some answering token wake;
Then it were well, were good—
All life were light—but now
My life is dark.

ANON.

'Tis an utter wreck
When such hopes perish. From that moment life
Has in its depths a well of bitterness,
For which there is no healing.

L. E. LONDON.

MARION went to the ball, in full expectation of Adeline's making a point of giving Sir Charles the explanation she had requested her

to make; but she could not do this before he saw Marion, and he would take no refusal to his solicitation to dance with him, and she found herself his partner, much against her will. She prevented this recurring, by resolutely declining to dance any more with any one; and by joining a party of friends, she avoided as much as possible conversing with Sir Charles.

She anxiously watched Adeline, to see if she appeared fulfilling her promise, but she was disappointed, and they returned home without Marion being gratified. Adeline declared that no opportunity had offered itself; and this was very probable, for it by no means follows that we can repair the evil we have done whenever we desire. Anxiously may we long to confess a fault, and disentangle the confusion we have caused, and yet the means, the power to do so may be wanting.

Marion determined to speak to Captain Vernon the following day, and for that purpose

she took her drawing into the library in the morning, hoping that he would return there after his walk, and that she might make him understand her feelings better than Adeline had done. She was bending over her easel, when the door was opened, and some one entered ; taking it for granted that it was Captain Vernon, she did not turn round until she had finished washing in her sky, merely saying :

“ Do not go away yet, Frederic, I do so want to speak to you for five minutes.”

She completed her tint, and then, throwing aside her brush, and looking up, expected to see Vernon as usual before the fire ; but, to her surprise, Sir Charles Seymour was there, with his eyes fixed upon her with the greatest interest. The astonishment she felt at seeing him, brought such a vivid colour to her cheek, that he might have been excused from attributing it to some other emotion. He began speaking calmly and indifferently, for he was fearful of her leaving the room.

“Don’t let me interrupt you, Miss Harcourt. Captain Vernon will be in almost directly. I left him in the street ; and he begged me to wait here for him, as he has promised to send on a letter for me with his own. Are you wishing to see him ?”

“Yes ; I came here to have a few minutes’ chat with him ; for really, since we have been in Rome, we are so constantly in society, that anything like a domestic *tête-à-tête* seems almost an impossibility ; and even when I want to speak to my sister, some little manœuvring is indispensable.”

“You speak as if your present life were not altogether satisfactory to you. Do you dislike continental arrangements ?”

“I am very much pleased with Rome, and I have seen much to interest me ; yet I must own that I can fancy a different, and more satisfactory existence than ours.”

Marion sighed as she said these words, for her thoughts were far away with Stanley in his

gloomy chambers. Sir Charles observed the cloud on her brow, and replied :

“Yes, I can fancy you long for a less desultory life, for more opportunities of exerting yourself, for more sympathy, for more interest and congeniality. You are so good and gentle, that such constant excitement cannot please you.”

Marion looked annoyed at Sir Charles’s words ; for she was by no means inclined to admit him to sufficient intimacy as to comment upon her character, especially in terms of flattering commendation. She, therefore, carelessly took up a book, inquiring :

“What do you think of this new ‘Life of Raphael,’ Sir Charles ? It is to me the most interesting. But perhaps you are not such an enthusiast for art and artists as I am ?”

The change in her manner was not lost upon Sir Charles ; and, with a slight shade of pique on his features, he replied to her remark. And they continued talking on indifferent

subjects for some time, although Sir Charles could scarcely refrain from alluding to his own feelings. He knew that it might be long before he should ever have another opportunity of being alone with Marion, and could not endure that it should escape without giving him any assistance. Her manner was certainly most discouraging to him ; yet he resolved to hazard everything, and learn his fate. Anything was better than this endless suspense.

He rose with the excuse of examining the half-finished drawing on the easel, and then seated himself by Marion, and with some hesitation said :

“ I am afraid I am very rash, very presumptuous, Miss Harcourt, in venturing to hope that you will listen to a few words on a subject which is of the greatest importance to me, to my happiness and peace of mind ; nay, do not turn away : you surely will not be so unkind as not to hear me ? ”

“Indeed, Sir Charles, you must excuse me ; I cannot pretend to offer you my assistance in any way.”

“How distant and annoyed you look ; I would not pain you for worlds, but you must let me speak.”

“I would spare you an explanation which I fear will not please you ; do not say any more, I entreat.”

“I must. In justice hear me ! you must have seen, from my anxiety to enjoy your society, the charms it had for me, that every day made me more interested in you—you cannot have been ignorant of this !”

“Sir Charles, you must excuse my interrupting you, but I cannot, I will not hear any more. Have I ever given you reason to believe your attentions were agreeable to me ? Have I not been almost rude, to prevent your being deceived ?”

“True, yet I have been hoping against hope.

Mrs. Vernon led me to believe you were disengaged, and I thought that time might overcome your very apparent indifference. Tell me—will it not? Will you reject me without knowing me better? will you not give me a chance of winning your regard?"

"There has been a great mistake, and one which I cannot regret sufficiently; you must have misunderstood Adeline, she could not have told you I was free."

"Are you engaged then? I have indeed been deceived. What can I do? I never thought of that; but it cannot be—you would not be here alone: the man who had won such a prize, would not abandon it. I will not believe it, I will not believe it; I will not give you up; you must learn to pity such love as mine. You will not utterly scorn and reject me?"

"Why will you speak in this way, Sir Charles? You annoy me most severely. I will

not hear such words. I am not true to him, who has my promised faith, to listen to love from you."

"I see it is so ; your look, your voice undeceive me. I am utterly lost ; for I do love you most truly. Nay, do not leave me—pray, pray remain a few minutes ; I will say anything, do anything you wish—only forgive me !"

"I cannot stay, I ought not. You forget you are speaking to one who already belongs to another."

"I will not say one word that shall vex you ; only do not abandon me in this cruel, unkind way ; you must surely pity me, for I have been misinformed all along. Fool, idiot, that I was, not to follow my own inclination, and speak to you before. To live in your presence day after day, to know you so well, to appreciate your character, to love you, and only to lose you for ever ; it maddens me ! Is there no hope for me ? no chance of my gaining you ?"

Marion rose, and endeavoured to reach the door, but Sir Charles stood before it, so that without some altercation she could not pass him; she therefore sat down again, saying :

“ Indeed you are acting in a way quite unworthy of yourself, Sir Charles, and unlike a man of honour and generosity. *I* never deceived you, I was always anxious to show you how perfectly indifferent I was to all with whom I associated ; but until very lately I never suspected that you were particularly interested about me, for as you were so intimate with Captain Vernon, I concluded that the fact of my being engaged must have been known to you.”

“ I never heard a word of it ; but I can understand you now. You are an angel ; never have you sought to involve me in this mistake ; if I had allowed your deportment to influence me, how differently I should have acted. But I believed you were so retiring, so gentle, that you

shrank from me, influenced by those endearing qualities, and trusted that time and my devotion would not have pleaded in vain ; but now—yet there must be some mystery, some difficulty—why are you here alone? Is there no chance of your position changing?”

“None. May I trust you as a *friend*, Sir Charles? May I confide to your honour my real circumstances? and then I am sure, from what I have seen of you, that you will cease to importune me; that you will acquit me of willingly paining you. If you have suffered on my account, I most truly regret it, and I would gladly do all in my power to prevent your remaining in suspense.”

Marion explained to Sir Charles, in a few words, what had passed with regard to Stanley, and added :

“After this, could I waver for an instant? You now understand why I have been so averse to society, why the slightest appearance of

receiving attention has been irksome to me. I would not give pain for worlds, but I fear I have been the cause of it to you ; however, I know you will do me the justice to believe it was done unconsciously."

Sir Charles turned towards Marion, for during her last few words he had been leaning against the mantel-piece, gazing into the blazing fire. He replied :

"I believe all that is kind, all that is good in you ; but you cannot understand how deeply I feel this disappointment. If you had told me that you cared nothing for me, I should not have been astonished : if you would only have allowed me to try to win you, it would have been something to hope for. In time you would have pitied me, for as there is a heaven above, no man ever loved a woman more truly than I do you ; nay, do not frown, I cannot harm you by telling you this. I see how it is, I feel I am without a chance ; but

you must have a little patience with me, for I have been deceived. You have my fate in your hands, do not fling it away without an effort to assuage its harshness."

"You must not talk so despondingly, Sir Charles. I am sure I would not hurt you for anything, but what can I say? I have been as frank with you as I could, and have explained everything to you as a friend, but I cannot hear such words as you have spoken to me."

"I would not offend you—you who are as good and pure as an angel of heaven. I will be anything you wish, only let me see you, do not banish me from you, you shall never hear or see anything of my feelings."

"No, Sir Charles, it will be far better that you should give up coming here; believe me, as we are both circumstanced, constant intercourse would be the worst thing you could indulge in."

“Then you will doom me to utter misery ; you are needlessly cruel. Why make me wretched ? in a very short time you will go away, and then I must lose you.”

“If we strive to act rightly, we are never entirely unhappy, and you will soon recover from this disappointment ; and I am sure if you listen to your own good feelings, Sir Charles, you will agree with me that absence is your best resource. Pray do not think me unkind for saying this, indeed I do not mean to be so.”

“I will do anything you wish. You are right, I could not be always with you, and remember the barrier between us ; but do not think severely of me. I have been miserably deceived, you alone have been true and good. I shall revere your memory, may I not hope for your friendship ? I will do anything for you, bear anything rather than forfeit your esteem.”

“I shall always be glad to consider you as

a friend, and in the future I hope we may meet as such ; but now you must leave me until you can forget this episode. We shall leave Rome very soon ; and when you are in England, perhaps we shall renew our acquaintance, without there being reason to make it inadvisable."

"Thank you ; you have done all you can by your kind consideration to soften my disappointment ; although you will not let me love you, you cannot prevent my worshipping you. Would that I could have such a blessed influence to guide me through life."

"I hope you may have, some day."

"Never, I shall not change. I will not annoy you by recurring to my sentiments, but they will never alter, you shall not have reason to repent of the kindness and confidence you have shown me ; look upon me as one who would obey your slightest wish."

There was such a despair and sorrow in

the tone of these words, that Marion could not resist a tear dimming her eyes. He saw this, and hurriedly said :

“Bless you, for ever ! I will not stay a moment longer, and will try to look upon you as one dead to me. I may see you again, for I cannot leave Rome for a few days, but do not be afraid of me, indeed you need not, I will not pain you by word or look.”

“I am sure you will not—you have too much good feeling, too much honour ; I would trust you implicitly.”

“Thank you ; you shall never have reason to repent it. Farewell.”

He took her hand and would have raised it to his lips, but feeling that she shrank from it, he dropped it and left her, as we would leave the picture of one who had been inexpressibly dear to us, and whom we had lost for ever. Marion gave no account of her interview with Sir Charles to any one, the

fact of his rejection remained a profound secret ; and the only time he met her in society afterwards, no one could have guessed that she knew the deepest feelings of his heart ; even had Stanley been present, he could not have objected to the calm, serious manner in which Sir Charles conversed with her. For he had such a respect for her character, that he adhered most rigidly to her wishes ; but he found such difficulty in doing this, that he resolved to take her advice and leave Rome : this he did, and without seeking to see her again. He found he could not trust himself with her without betraying his feelings, and this he knew really grieved her. For it was no affectation, no fine-drawn ideas of propriety which made Marion shrink so determinately from the observation or attention of others, and this Sir Charles knew. He understood her character but too well for his own peace, and every word she spoke, but riveted her

more closely to his soul. He decided to leave her, and adhered to the right course, for he was a man of high, noble feelings; and the confidence Marion has reposed in him, had roused his generosity, and he resolved to act in accordance with what she expected from him.

Although he was much inclined to indulge bitter feelings against Stanley, yet his own sense of honour forced him to appreciate his rival's conduct; and the deep love which he had discerned in Marion's voice when she had spoken of him, convinced him how vain was all idea of her ever changing. He had no resentment against her, for she had been most considerate and gentle; and although Sir Charles could not but own that in every look she had been true to Stanley, yet her own kindness of heart had shone forth and had poured balm into the wound she had made.

But if he were thus tender in his ideas of Marion, his scorn and dislike for Mrs. Vernon were equally strong. He felt that she had wantonly destroyed his happiness, and had utterly disregarded right principle; she was an evil experience in his life, and would have lowered his opinion of women to a fearfully low ebb, had not the memory of Marion's inexpressible sweetness and gentleness, blended with that perfect dignity which had preserved her faith to Stanley unruffled and unstained, risen to convince him of the worth and loveliness of her sex.

He left Rome with his feelings touched and his heart softened fully impressed with the power of goodness and truth, and his standard of moral excellence highly exalted. He returned to society, but not as he left it. Such conduct as Marion's is never without an effect; and in the future, Sir Charles Seymour often recurred to the gentle girl

who had been so firm in her adherence to right, yet so considerate in her assertion of it, so undeviatingly firm in pursuing duty yet with such power to sweeten its heavy requirements

CHAPTER XI.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear ;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear ?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well :
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

Yet even in these a thought will steal,
In spite of every vain endeavour,
And fiends might pity what I feel,
To know that thou art lost for ever.

BYRON.

THREE or four men were talking together
at their club one evening of all the gossip

of the day, and now and then appealing to Stanley, who sat near them with a newspaper in his hand; they were not friends of his, but merely club acquaintance, and the part he was taking in their conversation was just of the desultory, careless stamp, which such a relation causes. At last he appeared so interested in his reading, that the gay group ceased interrupting him, and gathered closer together to indulge their gossiping conversation.

Presently another joined this knot of men, and was received with warmer salutations than usual, for he had been absent for some months, and this was his first appearance among his acquaintance. Stanley raised his eyes to the new-comer, when he heard the excitement his appearance had created; but not recognising him, he resumed his book, disregarding the inquiries and chat that were being carried on near him. Loud and merry was the conversation, for the fresh addition

to the party was a man constantly in society, and always ready to impart a fund of anecdotes and gossip about his acquaintance. He had just returned from the continent with fresh scandal and *badinage*.

“Rome has been unusually gay this winter,” he said; “such numbers of English were there, that some of the balls quite reminded me of Grosvenor Square. Our *compatriotes* seem to think that when they go on the continent, that they are privileged to throw off the restraint and reserve for which they are blamed in England, and try to out-Herod Herod.”

“Have you any scandal to relate, Cameron?” asked another.

“Nothing particular, my dear fellow; although I believe I might amuse you with some of my experience. However, all Italy has been prostrating itself this winter at the feet of a certain English beauty; a married woman of course, for that seems *la mode* abroad; but notwithstanding her having very tolerable

powers of coquetry, she contrived to escape any very great censures. At Naples, I know, there were several bets pending on the result of her acquaintance with a certain Marquis, who was a friend of mine, a regular *mauvais sujet*, but very irresistible with the ladies; however, she suddenly took flight to Florence, and left the Marquis, the bets, and all."

"What was her name? She must have been lovely to have made such a sensation in Italy, where beauty is not so very rare."

"Nay, du Bois, I don't consider myself bound to find names for all my *dramatis personæ*; it might create mischief very often: besides, I think you knew her slightly before she was married, and I might hurt some tender reminiscences by telling you of her coquetry now. She certainly is magnificently beautiful."

"Did I know her? Who can it be? 'Magnificently beautiful' too! I ought to remember such a phoenix. That term can only apply to Adeline Harcourt, or rather to

Mrs. Vernon ; but I thought she was living in the country ?”

“Come, du Bois, yours is not a bad guess : that is the lady. She is still in Italy, and I think the sooner her husband brings her to England, the better for them both.”

Stanley, who had been on the point of departing, was attracted by the sound of Mrs. Vernon’s name, and still lingered with his eyes fixed on his book ; but no one regarded his presence, or if they did, his acquaintance with Mrs. Vernon was forgotten, as his engagement with her sister had never been made very public. Du Bois laughingly said :

“Then there has nothing very stirring been transpiring at Rome this winter ? no great stake in the matrimonial market, for which all have been competing ? When I was last there, Lord Morven was literally besieged ; it was a regular hunt, and very amusing, for it promoted gaiety and society amazingly.”

“Ah ! but he was quite unique in his pre-

tensions ; a princely income, a first-rate position, and as to his being rather mad, that was a mere trifle in the reckoning—such game is rare ; however, there has been a very fair catch in Rome, and he had no reason to complain of want of attention from the ladies, I am sure. He is a very good sort of fellow too, much above the general run of men with seven thousand a-year. Ah ! Dennison, I think you know him, Sir Charles Seymour ?”

“ Oh ! yes, very well, he is a trump ; I hope he will not be taken in by any manœuvring people.”

“ He was quite in the Vernon set—with them morning, noon, and night ; walking, dining, or driving, no one could be more completely at home !”

“ Was he sighing at the shrine of this *dame mariée* ? I should not have thought that was quite in his way, for I have often heard him exclaim against that continental fashion.”

“ There may be some other attraction ; he

used to talk very constantly with her, but he was too cordially friendly with her husband, for me to believe Mrs. Vernon was the object for which he was so constantly at her house."

"Then what was it, Cameron?" said Dennison. "Charley Seymour is too old a friend of mine, for me not to be interested about him; he must have some strong motive, for he is not generally a lady's man."

"I know nothing for certain, remember; there was no official announcement when I left Rome; but all his friends expected to hear of his engagement before long."

"I am delighted with your intelligence, for I am sure he has made a good choice."

"Well, I don't know; the lady he used to dance with, and certainly to gaze upon with very lover-like devotion, was too passive, too reserved for my taste; there was always a shade of sadness in her eyes. I never could understand her. She was very gentle, very lovely, but so dreamy. I never could quite believe I was

talking to an every-day mortal, but to something too pure and *untouchable* for great sympathy ; however, fortunately, we do not all see with the same eyes, and if Sir Charles had melted her icy covering, perhaps her peculiarity makes her all the more fascinating. I cannot say ; but she is certainly the lady he destines to make Lady Seymour."

"Ah, that is just the kind of character he would have admired ! he had such refined ideas of women, that I often told him he should have one made out of spun-glass."

"I do not think he would have managed the thing at all, if it had not been that Mrs. Vernon always had some excuse for his being at her house ; women have some mysterious way of smoothing difficulties and promoting their wishes which I cannot understand, and I can fancy this Mrs. Vernon would excel in such powers."

"But, after all, Cameron, you have not told us how it was that Mrs. Vernon had such

an interest in encouraging Seymour. Had she some dear friend or thrice-beloved cousin under her *chaperonage*, whom she was anxious to consign to his care?"

"Not a bad object for her to aim at, if I am not mistaken; in her first year of matronly dignity she was inclined to distinguish herself," said Dennison.

"Well, I am not sure that I have any right to divulge the lady's name, as you have no idea of it; not that I was made a confidant in the affair; I have only told you the current opinion and rumour of Rome."

"Come, Cameron, it is useless making a secret of it now you have told us so much; besides, we must know it soon—for if matters have proceeded so far, I suppose the marriage will not be long delayed, therefore the name cannot be concealed—besides, here is Dennison all anxiety to hear who is to be the wife of his dear friend."

"I think I shall leave you to guess until

to-morrow, and then if your cogitations have been in vain, I will tell you the magic name."

"Nonsense! we shall have forgotten all about it by that time; you are enough man of the world to know that a story should never be left unfinished, for so many things intervene which destroy one's interest. Who can tell where half of us may be to-morrow?"

"Well, as I believe none of you were *prétendants* to the favour of the lady, and are not consequently likely to suffer from the intelligence of her being won by another more fortunate man, I will complete my history by giving its heroine a name, though you, du Bois, at all events, might have guessed long ago that it was Mrs. Vernon's sister, Miss Harcourt."

"Indeed! I did not know she was out of England. I am rather surprised, for I had made a little romance of my own about her feelings, and fancied they were already in some

one's keeping ; however, who can know a woman's mind ?”

“ You might have been right once ; but what woman would refuse a Baronet and seven thousand a-year ? You know the age of romance is exploded.”

Cameron's sentence was interrupted by a sudden noise near him ; it was a book which Stanley had thrown down as he rose to leave the room. The unusual contraction of his brow, and a certain expression of his features, struck du Bois as he departed ; but he made no remark, and Stanley found himself in the street without having been accosted by any.

Not a word of that careless, heartless conversation had escaped him ; from the first mention of Adeline he had remained as if fascinated, listening to it all, even until the sound of Marion's name had completed the conviction that it was of her allusion had been made ; and then, unable to control himself, he

had flung aside his book, and was now walking rapidly through the cold, dark winter-night. Tortured by an unspeakable agony, overwhelmed by fancies which he was too much agitated to define, he never felt the falling sleet upon his face, nor was conscious whither he was going. The one feeling which was racking him, the stern fact which seemed grasping his very soul, was that he had lost her. On—on he went, unable to think distinctly, to recal clearly what he had heard ; there was a tumult of misery, a fierce sense of wrong, a wild, maddening storm of conflicting passion in his heart, and thus he found himself unknowingly in the Temple, at his chambers.

He lighted his candle, walked up the old, gloomy stairs, doing all this as if he were in some dream or trance. He placed the light upon the table, and still felt unable to collect his thoughts sufficiently to fully comprehend the cause of his wretchedness.

He seized Marion's portrait, and gazed

earnestly upon it for a few minutes, pressed it passionately to his lips, then flung it on the table, as if the very touch of it maddened him. He had worshipped her, loved her so deeply, so entirely, that the thought of losing her was almost more than he could bear; he paced the room hastily, for his conflicting feelings were raging so that action seemed a necessity; he then opened the miniature again, and seemed to seek to read in the depths of the pure, gentle eyes some clue, some reason for what he had heard. But they rested on him with such tenderness that he was quite overcome, and in his torture and misery the proud man groaned aloud, and two scalding tears fell on the portrait in his hand. He was unconscious of these proofs of his emotion, and still bent over the well-known features, until he felt a returning sense of her truth and love; but as he grew calmer, the words he had heard came back as if with keen repetition, and as he analysed their bearing and import, his brow grew darker, and

his lips compressed with the strong emotions which were surging within. The thought of her listening to words of love from another, that ere long she might belong to another, that she was giving this other those feelings which he had treasured as his own alone, made his brain reel; and then his strong, deep affection rose, and the yearning, passionate love he had felt for her swelled his heart; and when he saw the wreck of hopes and happiness which lay before him, he shrank from the desolation and misery it presented.

Yet he could not quite bring himself to believe that she had broken her faith, and given him up; but the thrill of joy these gleams of hope brought, only made the agonies of sorrow and disappointment which succeeded them more poignant. For if he were not absolutely certain of her desertion, the slight doubts of it only kept him in more bitter suspense, in more cruel suffering. No one can

describe adequately the alternations of doubt, of jealousy, of passionate tenderness, of burning rage, of tearful regret, of deep despair which tossed and disturbed Stanley during that night : there is a veil between us and the inmost heart of our fellows, and an attempt to raise it might appal the boldest of us. The struggle was fierce, and, alas ! its result was not victory over the harsh feelings, over the torturing doubts, and sickening misery ; but a dull, dead sense of despair, a bitter loathing of human nature, a cold, stern closing of the heart to all sympathies.

Thus the morning light came, and found Stanley with strong traces on his features of the tornado of passions which had swept over his soul ; for there was an expression in those dark, deep eyes which made one involuntarily shrink, for it told of unspeakable misery, of cureless anguish, restrained by an unconquerable pride. And thus he went into the battling world, thus he plunged into the vortex of

ambition and toil, now indeed an arena where men seemed like fiends in their fierce contentions and overbearing emulations; for he had no blessed hope of sympathy, no influence of love to satisfy his endeavours, or to gild his triumphs, instead of establishing them upon the harsh foundations of the world; and in the first pain of his wounded feelings, the thought of consolation from Heaven seemed distant and unsufficing. Yet he wavered not, but more sternly than ever pursued his chosen track, crushing down the blighted feeling as best he could, and forgetting in the bitterness of the present, all thoughts of the faith he had vowed to preserve free from doubts and suspicions, when he had last pressed Marion to his heart. And bitterly, heavily did he suffer from his want of reliance in his betrothed: he went on his pilgrimage with a cloud for ever over him, with torture and intensest sorrow for his companions, until he almost longed for death to free him from such a trial. In the midst of

his blackest despair, such a tender longing to see Marion once more would steal over him, the memory of her last loving glance would rise so vividly, that he felt as if he must sacrifice all to have one more interview ; but then the thought that perhaps he might find another blessed by that gentle, beaming gaze, would return, and he would fling away all softening influences, all lingering hopes of her truth, and devote himself to his daily strife and toils.

CHAPTER XII.

Not from thee the wound should come ;

No, not from thee.

I care not what, or whence my doom,

So not from thee !

Cold triumph ! first to make

This heart thine own,

And then the mirror break

Where fix'd thou shin'st alone.

Not from thee the wound should come,

Oh ! not from thee.

I care not what, or whence my doom,

So not from thee !

THOMAS MOORE.

STANLEY went on his way, overwhelmed
with intense sorrow—tossed with conflicting

emotions—unable to calm his feelings by any abiding faith in Marion: he had not written to her since he had heard the fatal news of another having superseded him. Several times he had commenced a letter, but he could not complete it—how could he address her? His love prevented his writing the bitter reproaches which came to his lips, and yet he would not speak of that love to one who had scorned and deserted him.

While he was agitated in this way, Marion was rejoicing in the prospect of speedily returning to England. She was writing her last letter from Rome; and the deep love which was shrined in her heart might have been traced in the tone of her letter by any unprejudiced reader. She paused to consider whether she should tell Arthur what had passed between her and Sir Charles Seymour. The wish of confiding every thought to him made her anxious to do so; and yet she shrank from speaking of the secret of another,

of betraying the confidence which was, as it were, committed to her honour ; for, as every high-minded woman must feel, she could not bear to speak to another of the refusal of that highest compliment which a man can pay her, that of selecting her from all others, and offering her his love, himself, and everything. Therefore, she finished her letter without mentioning Sir Charles's name, never dreaming of the chance of any rumours about him having reached Stanley, and so secure of the truth of her own love, that she would not have thought he could have doubted it, even had report spoken as it might.

Little did she know the torture her letter, written as it was with feelings of the most perfect faith and of deepest love, would cause Stanley. He dwelt upon every word of endearment, and felt as if she could not have written them had she been false ; and yet the words he had heard in the club kept ringing in his ears, until all his former

doubts of woman's constancy, all his misgivings and suspicions, seemed fearfully realized.

Notwithstanding Marion's entreaties that he would write—for his unusual silence had made her very uneasy—he could not resolve to do so. He had conjured up such images of her encouragement of another, that he could not endure to address one whom he had thought, was his only.

Marion had said in her letter, that before it could reach Stanley, she should have accompanied Captain and Mrs. Vernon to Paris; and while the thought that she was within so short a distance from him made his heart thrill with an indefinable feeling of rapture, and then contract with a sense of wretchedness, he found himself dwelling so constantly upon her, and the desire of once more seeing her, false though she might be, grew so uncontrollably powerful, as if some giant

obligation were pressing him towards her, that, after many struggles with himself, he determined to leave England for a few days, to take one more look (it might be the last) of her; he felt it would be an unspeakable relief to be able to tell her how intensely he had loved her—to give vent to some of the emotions which seemed as if they would madden him, if they were restrained much longer.

Therefore, he embarked in the steamer, and travelled without an hour's delay, until he reached Paris, his feelings becoming more excited as he approached the place where he knew Marion was. It was late in the evening when he arrived, and utterly exhausted both in mind and body, he found himself unequal to make any inquiries that night where he could find the Vernons. He would not commission any one else to do this, for he was anxious that Marion should not have

any idea of his being in Paris; for he had formed the wish of seeing her, when she could not recognise him, that he might judge by her manners and looks of the state of her feelings; while he indulged a thousand anticipations of her manner, when he should see her, and tormented himself with pictures of the smiles his rival was enjoying, he could not calm his throbbing pulse, nor compose himself to rest.

Wearied, yet restless, he tossed on his bed, only anxious for the morning light; yet just as that was stealing on, he fell into that heavy slumber, which sometimes succeeds hours of watchful anxiety. When he aroused himself, the sun was shining brightly in the clear sky; and remembering Marion's habit of walking early, he left his hotel with a vague expectation of meeting her.

He determined that his first inquiries should be made at the post-office, but before he directed

his steps there, he felt an irresistible impulse to take a turn in the Tuileries. It was too early for the gay world to be there : the neat *bonnes* with their merry, sprightly charges were almost the sole occupants of the gardens, and they were sufficiently numerous to prevent them looking at all deserted. The children, in all the various costumes which are to be seen in Paris, were flitting about like butterflies in the walks, chattering with that vivacity which is inherent to their nation. Now and then two or three gentlemen with their cigars passed along, or a quiet couple enjoying a stroll before their friends were likely to interrupt their *tête-à-tête*. Stanley lounged through one or two walks, and then threw himself upon a seat which was under a drooping ash, which although yet leafless, still gave some shelter and prevented his position being very clearly discerned from the avenue near him. He sat here for a few moments, gazing intently upon the path, for he felt within

himself a strange conviction that he should see Marion there, as certainly as if he had made an appointment with her.

And ere long he recognized her well-known bearing in the distance ; his heart beat violently—he was only conscious of her being near him—all else was forgotten in the wild emotions of that moment ; but the next glance checked these feelings, and seemed to chill him into marble, for her hand was resting on the arm of a gentleman, whom Stanley knew was not Captain Vernon, for his dark eyes, with rather a reckless expression, and heavy moustache gave him a totally different appearance. Stanley sat motionless, watching her as she approached him. Her face was turned towards him ; she was looking up earnestly in her companion's face. Stanley frowned when he saw her frank, confiding, manner, for he knew she never granted that to any but her nearest and dearest friends ; but he could not conceal from himself that her

features wore an expression of sadness and anxiety, which touched him in spite of his wrongs. Her fair hair was parted over that open brow which he had gazed on so often, and on which he could read no traces of deception ; the pure, gentle expression still lingered in her eyes ; and so she passed on, little dreaming who was looking on her, or that pale cheek would soon have gained a deeper hue.

When she had gone, Stanley looked round in search of the Vernons, but they were nowhere to be seen : she was then alone with this gentleman, with this hated rival. That circumstance added confirmation to his suspicions ; he started up, and rapidly left the Tuileries. When in after days he looked back to his emotions during that morning, he shuddered when he remembered his sufferings : he wondered how he could have waited calmly, watching his idolized love with another ; but the very strength of his feelings paralyzed him. And it was not

for half an hour after he had lost sight of her, that he could fully realize that she had passed him, that it was not some tantalizing vision, or some creation of his fancy. His anxiety to speak to her was now stronger than ever; his first object was to discover her residence, and hastening to the post-office, he soon learnt where the Vernons were staying. When he had the power in his own hands of meeting her, he hesitated and shrank from it, for he knew how exquisitely painful their interview would be.

How could he reproach her—she, whose very look was peace and gentleness—how tell her of the cruel sufferings which she had inflicted upon him? and yet had he not been wronged? and his pride arose to strengthen his resolution and to steel his nerves. He walked slowly up the street where the Vernons lived, endeavouring to conquer the emotions which were agitating him, to bring his mind

to that point when all may be endured silently and heroically, for he dreaded being overcome by his agony, and of speaking as bitterly as he felt. He would not have caused one pang of remorse to the woman he adored ; he felt anxious to shield her from herself ; but he mistrusted his feelings, for he knew how hard the trial would be to find himself in the same room with her, and yet to remember she had voluntarily flung him away, and given her heart to another's keeping.

It would be vain to attempt to describe in their fulness and depth the passions which were swaying Stanley, when he approached the Vernons' house. With his old impulse, he found his fingers on his wrist, as if seeking to gauge his emotions by the rapid pulsations which quivered beneath ; proudly compressing his lips, he had nearly reached the entrance, when the same figure issued from it which he had seen that morning by Marion's side.

There was no mistaking the haughty, indifferent carriage, the almost supercilious glance of the eye.

This *rencontre* of his rival just leaving Marion's house quite conquered all lingering tenderness which had been agitating him, and with an almost harsh and angry countenance he demanded admittance to Miss Harcourt's presence. The servant hesitated, for Captain and Mrs. Vernon were out; but there was something in Stanley's manner which effectually prevented all denial. Even although he refused to give his name, the servant felt irresistibly constrained to show him into the drawing-room.

It was empty ; and it was at least a quarter of an hour that Stanley remained there alone.

Oh ! the suspense, the unutterable anguish of that time, when the human susceptibilities were bleeding, and human weakness most trembling, and while the fierce human passions

were raging, and despair alone seemed the refuge from their torment.

On every side were traces of Marion's influence ; her song-book was open upon the piano, open, too, at a ballad which was Stanley's peculiar favourite, the last she had ever sung to him ; and now the wounding conviction struck him, that she had been singing this to another. Her desk stood on a small table in one of the windows, and as Stanley gazed on it, he could not restrain a bitter sigh when he remembered the many tender letters she had written upon it, now to be his no longer. Her drawings and colour-box were too in his sight, recalling memories of their first days of mutual happiness, when he had gained her confession of affection, and had revelled in the bliss of reciprocal love. He could not rest his eyes anywhere without their meeting something speaking of her, some object which was associated with her, and her only. Every moment

seemed an age to him, as he stood there in that gay and sunny room, the very cheerfulness of which contrasted but too painfully with his own wretchedness ; he felt as if he could not endure it longer, as if every thought were but adding fresh fuel to the fire which consumed him ; yet still he stood there, calm and stern, though his eye was gleaming, and his lips were pressed firmly together to control the passions within ; that countenance spoke as plainly as could be of the struggle between the will and the feelings, that direct battle which can be waged on this earth, and of the unconquerable pride, which in the deepest anguish of the spirit could yet keep an iron restraint over its agonies.

Regardless of the time—for fathomless sorrow, like eternity, takes no account of time—he stood with his eyes fixed upon the door, as if invoking it to disclose the object of his devotion. At last the faint rustling sound of garments, which in his lover's dream he had compared to the

quivering of angel's wings, struck his ear ; and with one convulsive frown of his pale brow one wild throb of that tortured heart, before it sunk into a stern and rigid calmness, he waited until his idol, yet lost one, should meet his eye.

CHAPTER XIII.

Yes ! I have loved thee. Ah ! how well,
But words are wild and weak ;
The depth of that pervading spell,
I dare not trust my *tongue* to tell,
And *hearts* may never speak.

Though thou hast wrapped me in a cloud
Nought now may e'er dispel,
In silentness my wrongs I'll shroud,
And love, reproach, pain, passion, crowd
Into *one* word—Farewell !

ALARIC WATTS.

MARION'S hand was on the lock, slowly it turned, for she was uncertain who she would meet—that it would be Stanley she never

imagined—the door opened and she entered. Stanley involuntarily stepped hastily forward to meet her. One hurried exclamation of delight, and she was in his arms. One minute only, and he released her, with such coldness and sternness that she felt an indescribable shudder pass over her frame. She looked up at him, and the reproachful expression of his eyes, the unusual paleness of his countenance made her shrink with alarm. This momentary impulse was not lost upon him, and confirmed his suspicions, and made his brow contract almost fiercely for an instant. Before she had time to speak, he said, in a voice so hoarse, so low, that the blood which had flushed brightly on Marion's cheek seemed curdled at her heart :

“You are trembling, Marion ; nay, do not fear me, I am not come to reproach you.”

She raised her eyes to him, with such a look of bewilderment, of wonder, that, notwithstanding his agony, he felt an instinctive shadow of

relief. She could not speak, but laying her hand on his arm, stood gazing on him. He shook it off, for her touch almost conquered his self-control ; and he felt that if he once yielded to any tender emotion, the scene would be too painful to bear. He went on :

“I am not come here to reproach you, Marion, though God only knows how you have wrung my very soul. I have heard of all, but I could not refrain from seeing you once more before it was too late — but it is more painful than ever I imagined.”

All Marion could murmur was, “Arthur, Arthur,” in such a trembling and heart-breaking voice, that Stanley was obliged to turn away. She sank on to a chair, her features pale as marble, her eyes still fixed on him, as if to divine what was the cause of this most unexpected reception. He looked again at her, saying :

“Nay, do not distress yourself, Marion ; you

have consulted your own wishes—may you be happy. You must forget me—yes, forget the one who lived for you only, who has considered your love as the one consolation for everything painful.”

“Arthur, Arthur, what can you mean?” was all the poor, faltering voice could whisper, for Marion felt her very heart ceasing to beat, and with all her anxiety to understand what Stanley meant, she could scarcely preserve her consciousness. Heedless of the beseeching misery on her countenance, and irritated almost beyond all restraint, at what seemed to him an aggravation of her deception, Stanley continued speaking rapidly :

“What can I mean? Marion, Marion, why keep up this mockery? You, who persuaded me that my doubts, my suspicions of woman’s truth, were all vain and groundless; who taught me to believe in love, until I yielded every thought to its influence; you have been the

one to rouse me from my dream, to realize the truth of my misgivings. You are false to me."

"Never, never ! What can have caused this fearful mistake ?"

"Do not attempt to deceive me," interrupted Stanley, almost fiercely ; "do not sully the bright image of truth that I have always believed you to be, by denying your own actions—that you have scorned a love that was deep as eternity, and stronger than death, I *know*—that is done, but do not add to my agony by lowering yourself to conceal what has passed."

Gentle as Marion was, her brow flushed with resentment at Arthur's injustice, and although her agitation almost prevented her speaking articulately, he could not escape hearing :

"You are cruel, unkind to reproach me in this way, when I am utterly ignorant how I have offended you."

"Offended me ! no, Marion, I am not

offended, but deeply hurt; I, who have been living on the memory of the past, and on my hopes of the future, during the months of your absence, am more than offended to find myself so completely deceived."

"You are deceived, indeed, but not by me. Tell me plainly what you mean, Arthur, while I can understand you, for I am becoming perfectly bewildered."

And as she said these words, she drew her hand over her brow, as if to clear away some mist which oppressed her sight. He answered :

"I would not reproach you, nor accuse you. You should spare me this; it is but mocking my anguish!"

"What can I do?" murmured Marion; "you are torturing me by this inexplicable mystery. If ever you loved me, Arthur, tell me at once what all this means."

"Answer me a question: do you know Sir Charles Seymour?"

“Yes, very well; what has that to do with us?”

“Good Heavens! how women can parley when a man’s heart is breaking! What has it to do with us? that he has been for ever with you; that you have accepted his proposals; that even in England I heard that the preliminaries of your marriage were being talked of! And this is nothing to us? You and I differ strangely indeed in our views!”

“No, no—it is false.”

“I saw you with him this morning; were you not leaning on his arm, and gazing at him with looks of affection? Now, can you understand me?”

A faint sigh was all the reply Marion could give, for she could no longer command herself at these bitter words, and still more bitter tone; her hand was pressed for an instant to her heart, and then fell powerless at her side. She

had fainted. Stanley could not do less than to put his arm round the drooping figure of the insensible girl, and lift her to a sofa. He hesitated whether to summon assistance, and then to leave her ; but the rigid paleness of her features, as she lay so still and calm, with the long tresses of her hair falling over the sofa, until they nearly swept the carpet, touched him so powerfully, that he could not tear himself away. For an instant he stood proud and cold, as if this proof of her suffering were almost a retribution for her deserting him ; but there was something so pure, so lovely in that helpless countenance, that he felt his resentment calmed, and only the intensity of his love burning within him. He forgot his wrongs, all but that she was suffering ; and kneeling beside her, he took her hand in his—never had it laid so passively there—and murmured passionate words of tenderness, such words which reached her soul, even in its death-

like trance, and rekindled the suspended spark of animation ; her heart slightly fluttered, but her eyes were still closed. He raised her head on his shoulder, and gazed intently on her. At last she lifted those long, dark lashes for one moment. He met her glance, so full of unutterable love, that his heart seemed to bound beneath its misery. The eyelids drooped again, but a faint smile of happiness played on her lips, for his look had lost its sternness, and she knew he was still near her. But as her senses regained their power, the memory of what had passed returned, and she anxiously whispered :

“ It was all a dreadful dream, dearest ; was it not ? ”

These words recalled Stanley to the remembrance of his circumstances ; he withdrew his arm from her head, and said, coldly :

“ You know best ; have you nothing to tell me about Sir Charles Seymour ? ”

“ Nothing, but that he is a great friend of

Frederic's, and that we saw him frequently in Rome."

"And what is he to you, Marion?"

"A friend—scarcely even that—a pleasant acquaintance."

"Then, how is it you walk in Paris alone with only a pleasant acquaintance?"

"I never walked alone with him in my life, and certainly could not in Paris, as I believe he is many miles away."

"Oh! then perhaps I have mistaken the name. Can you tell me who was your companion this morning in the Tuileries? I saw a gentleman with you."

"I was walking with my brother Frank, who has just joined us here; surely you cannot object to that?"

"Your brother! I had forgotten there was such a person in existence. Thank God, that at least is explained. And do you really mean to say, Marion, that all the reports about

you and Sir Charles Seymour are without foundation? Only prove to me that you are all I have pictured you, only say you are true!"

"I have never wavered for an instant," was the low but calm reply.

"What agony I have endured!" and Stanley related all that he had heard at the club, and the grief it had caused him. When he ceased speaking, Marion still sat silent and motionless; at last she said:

"How could you doubt me, Arthur, after all the promises you made, that whatever might happen, you would always trust to my love?"

"Forgive me, my darling, there is no excuse for me."

"It was cruel, for I have never felt the slightest change; you have never left my thoughts; nothing could have made me suspect your truth."

"But you are an angel, my Marion, and

you know my weakness. Oh! if you could guess how I have suffered, you would forgive me."

"If you knew how I loved you, Arthur, you would have spared me the misery of the last half hour."

"My dearest, don't think of it; you must remember what I was feeling when I fancied that I had lost you for ever."

"How could you imagine such a thing? We shall never be happy if you listen to all the foolish reports you hear."

"I shall never doubt you again. But you must tell me what gave rise to the rumour; you do not know how positively it was asserted."

"Nay, I will not tell you all now, dearest, as a little punishment for your suspicion. It was owing to Adeline's foolish conduct that there was any misunderstanding at all; but I assure you most truly, that never in the faintest

thought have I been untrue to you. Adeline insisted upon mixing in society constantly, and soon attracted admiration. Sir Charles became acquainted with us, and was, perhaps, more than usually attentive in public. I can tell you no more, but that he never was; or can be, more to me than any other clever gentlemanly man; and as to your being jealous, you had not a shadow of a reason for such a feeling."

"I can guess how it was; you are a dear, honourable girl, and I have been worse than a fool, a madman in my conduct. Can you ever forgive me? I do not deserve such love as yours; I am so proud, so hasty, so suspicious. Yet I do adore you, my own, and you must forget my cruel conduct to-day."

A few tears rushed into Marion's soft eyes, as she smiled her forgiveness. Her gentle tenderness quite melted Stanley, and he felt as if he never could compensate to her for having doubted her affection. He sat beside her on

the sofa, and pressing his lips on her fair brow, he whispered his love in such words of tenderness, that Marion felt amply repaid for all her suspense. He said :

“ Well, my own, you do not ask me how I am progressing in my worldly prospects, how my fortunes are speeding ; and yet you well know how much my happiness depends upon my success.”

A faint blush flitted over Marion’s cheek, as she replied :

“ I never thought of that, dearest ; while you are with me, I feel as if I wanted nothing more. If you knew how I have looked forward to our meeting, you would not be surprised that I had forgotten to ask you any questions.”

“ And for me to surprise you so cruelly when we did meet, my love. I shall never forgive myself ; a whole life of devotion can never repay your meekness and forbearance. You must think me very unkind.”

“No, dearest Arthur, I make every allowance for your peculiar feelings. I will not deny that I was very unhappy,” and a slight shudder seemed to pass over her at the thought of her sensations; “but I saw you were unhappy too, and that made me forget what appeared severe.”

“My own, kind, generous darling!” whispered Stanley, fondly.

“Do you know, Arthur, that I believe if you were to be twenty times more harsh than you were to-day, I should love you still. I cannot understand my feelings at all, and I often think I am loving you too well; but I suppose I ought not to tell you all this nonsense.”

A tender embrace was all the answer Marion had, but she well understood how deeply gratified Stanley always was by her expressions of affection.

She could not comprehend the principle of disguising her love; it was far too serious a

thing to be guided by conventionalities and simulations. She felt it was a holy and eternal power, which would never lose its influence over her, and she did not shrink from Stanley's looking into her heart, and reading its inmost feelings.

To a man like him, this was her most endearing trait. Her perfect sincerity, and all absence of worldly mannerism, was the cementing bond of their love.

He was so misgiving, so mistrustful, that no one could have allayed such feelings, without Marion's warm-hearted disposition, and perfect gentleness and mildness ; her voice, the spiritual purity of her eyes, all combined to soothe and convince Stanley ; and as he felt her hand in his, and saw the tenderness speaking in every glance, he was almost too happy for words. He could only remain two days in Paris, but they were days of heartfelt joy, both for him and Marion. It was so sweet to be again together,

free from all embittering influences ; and when they parted, it was with the hope of speedily meeting in England.

How differently Stanley felt when he again found himself in the Temple, to what he had done when he left it ;—now, all was bright and cheerful, and he could return to his labour with energy, for it was the means to the goal of his dearest hopes. He had succeeded most unexpectedly and unusually in his profession, and he began to indulge sweet visions of being, before long, in a position which would justify his seeking the fulfilment of Marion's engagement. But he was resolved not to do this until no objection could possibly be raised, for after her generous adherence to him, he had determined to do all in his power to win her a home which the proudest would not scorn to occupy ; towards this point every energy had been directed, and he began to see his aspirations were likely to be realized ; he remembered the blush which had

mantled Marion's cheek when he had whispered his hopes of soon claiming her for his own, and it inspired him with a fresh impulse for exertion.

CHAPTER XIV.

Absence is full of memory, it teaches
The value of old familiar things,
The strengthener of affection, while it reaches
O'er the dark parting with an angel's wings.

ANON.
.

Loves, friendships, hopes, and dear remembrances,
The kind embracings of the heart, and hours
Of happy thought and smiles coming to tears—
These were the rays that wander'd thro' the gloom
Of mortal life.

POLLOK.

It seemed almost a dream to Marion, when
she looked back upon Stanley's visit, so rapid

and so startling had it been. Yet the more she reflected about it, the more real were the influences it had created. She had never seen him so harsh, so angry ; for bitter and severe as she knew he was often considered, to her he had ever been tender and considerate ; the almost defying expression of his eyes, when he had upbraided her for inconstancy, and the withering reproach of his voice, haunted her for days.

But with all the love of her nature, she never blamed him, but invented excuses and extenuations for him in her heart. She never thought of resenting his injustice, of showing him how he had hurt her confiding truth ; but all she wished for, was to save him from self-reproach, from remembering how he had wronged her, and to prove by her affection, how truly he might rely upon her.

With the fond worship of a loving woman, she felt that the very fault of his character but

increased her devotion, for he needed sympathy and soothing, and this she yearned to give him ; had he been always cool and reasonable, although she might have revered him more, she could not have poured such a flood of endearing love over him, as now when he had confessed he had erred, and had thrown himself upon her gentleness for forgiveness.

She now felt that while he was strong and noble, and able to stem the rough current of the world, yet that his proud spirit would need all the sweet ministrings of woman's love ; and she knew that an unceasing fountain of it was swelling in her breast which would never tire of pouring its waters over his soul.

I believe that with pure-hearted, ardent-feeling women like Marion, this love for those who are morally unhappy, if such a term be admissible, is deeply rooted. I have seen them struggle against indifference, against unkindness and neglect, with a patient smile of affection,

and unselfishly devote every faculty of their being to the one on whom the world has laid its vote of censure. This is often completely misunderstood, and her deep feelings of compassionate sympathy are sarcastically construed into a lenity towards moral wrong, and an indifference to right.

Little do those who attack her thus, comprehend the organization of a mind which, while it would shun and shrink from sin, can yet enter into the anguish and abasement of the sinning spirit, when it awakens from its practices, and learns the defilement and miseries of evil.

There are some women, who, to such a soul, can bring exhaustless treasures of love; and, like the angels, weep pitying tears and pour balm of sympathy into the wounded heart, feeling that of all human wretchedness, that must be the greatest which arises from sin, that moral suffering requires tenderer amelio-

ration than bodily torture. What terms of blame and reproach would be thought too severe for her who could draw her silken garments around her and pass on, heedless of the agonies of a dying fellow-creature, from fear of risking her own safety by assisting one, who must languish without her influence? and it is less cruel to leave the anguish of the soul without sympathy!

Let those who pride themselves on their own purity, who shrink from contaminating it by showing mercy to their fellows, bow their heads in abasement; for she who forgets self in the fulness of her mission of peace and love, has attained a purity of spirit, to which the cold-hearted Pharisee with his thanksgiving for moral superiority, can never reach.

She has fulfilled the highest requirement of mortality—of truly loving through all obstacles; she has that love which “thinketh no evil,” and which is pure as that which calls forth the

joys of the sinless spirits in heaven over the repenting sinner. And such a holy, unselfish feeling is never without its power for good ; even while the being on whom such love is being shed appears careless and untouched by it, it is penetrating his very soul : and in the slow process of building up the moral fabric, which has been shattered by the powers of evil, the sunny influence of woman's tenderness and devotion will strengthen its foundation, and irradiate its battlements, until something like peace and joy arise to pour their consoling sweetness upon the heart which was first dead to virtue, and when it awoke to remorse, would perhaps have lived on in fierce defiance of good, unless it had been softened by human sympathy.

Therefore, although Marion shrunk from the remembrance of Stanley's anger, yet she was happy in knowing that she should be able to prove her tenderness by soothing and calming him, when the harsh suspicions of his nature

might tend to blast his peace and enjoyment.

Captain Vernon was anxious to return to England, for he was not wearied of the life of a country gentleman ; and it seemed a long time since he had been abroad, for spring was now arrived, the gaieties of the Carnival were over, so that Mrs. Vernon did not object to leave Paris, although her fancy for Fountain Court had not returned with the fresh foliage, and the budding flowers, as she had made her husband believe it would have done. Before they left France Marion had a letter from Mrs. Harcourt, which was more satisfactory than any she had received since the change in Stanley's position. For the first time she voluntarily referred to him, and spoke favourably of his progress at the bar, and mentioned that she had met one of the judges at dinner, and that he had spoken in the highest terms of his talents and energy, and had named him as one of the most rising

men of the day. Marion hailed this change with delight, as she augured from it that her mother was relaxing in her opposition to her engagement, and that when she returned to England she should be able to renew her intercourse with Stanley. A few more days and the Vernons were *en route* for England. How Marion rejoiced at the prospect of once more returning to her home, and to a continuance of those happy days when she could anticipate with almost certainty upon seeing Arthur constantly.

When they found themselves on board the packet to cross the Channel, to their great surprise they found Murray, and Mrs. Brandon and her family there also. It is curious how friends do meet on the continent when they least expect it. It was an agreeable surprise to more than one of the party that they were to join company during their passage, short as it was.

Marion was delighted to hear renewed praises of Stanley, and more detailed accounts of his proceedings than he had found time to give her himself; and Murray was pleased to be able to relieve her anxiety, and to call a look of contentment and happiness into her gentle countenance; for, although Marion had never been one of his passing fancies, yet he had a high regard for her; and now that she had been so true to his best friend in his distress, he treated her with even more deference than before.

Murray was conscious of a slight shadow of his old feelings for Mrs. Vernon when he first met her; he had not seen her since her marriage; but, although her excessive loveliness was unimpaired—indeed some might have thought it increased—yet the finished and perfectly easy manners of the woman of the world, had less charms for him than the dreamy uncertainty of character which had fascinated him, when she had first appeared in society. And then his

own character was improved since he had parted with her; he would not now have devoted himself to her, as he had once unhesitatingly thought of doing; and as he greeted her, he could not help remembering how Stanley had warned him to avoid Mrs. Vernon's society, for the sight of her speaking countenance reminded him of the feelings it had once excited. However, the most critical observer could not have detected one trace of a former lover in his calm, friendly manner; and even Marion smiled when she recollected how his marked attentions to her sister had once annoyed her.

If one could have strictly analysed Adeline's heart, I am not sure a slight shadow of pique and disappointment would not have been found there. For with all the penetration which most women possess, she had been fully aware how much Murray had admired her, and her vanity could scarcely forgive him for meeting her with such total absence of any lingering tenderness.

I am even afraid that, had she been acutely examined, she could not have been acquitted of endeavouring to attract him to her side by many little manœuvres ; but he continued to pace the deck with Marion and Captain Vernon, leaving her to chat with the Brandons ; and she at last felt convinced, that it was useless to play off her fascinations upon him. She then threw a dash of haughtiness into her manner towards him, and treated him with that *insouciance* which some women think proper to show to a refractory admirer ; but she little knew how completely this betrayed her to a man with Murray's penetration, nor how he despised her for seeking to revive feelings in him which she knew could only tend to his unhappiness. It made him reflect still more deeply upon his own heartless conduct to many girls, when, to gratify his own vanity or love of excitement, he had devoted himself to them and won affection, which he had then flung aside uncherished and unrequited.

Marion soon guessed that there was something more than mere accident in the Brandons meeting Murray ; and from what she observed during their short voyage, she was convinced that he was not perfectly indifferent to Florence Brandon. At all events, she was most assiduous in her attempts to please and amuse him, and although Marion did not imagine he felt any very deep attachment for her, yet his manner was that of a man who was not averse to the young lady's society ; and some remarks which he made, confirmed her in the opinion that when Murray sailed for India, in all probability that Florence would accompany him there.

The Brandons had lately met Sir Charles Seymour, and from the delight with which they spoke of having made his acquaintance, it was quite evident that they considered him a valuable acquisition. Marion could scarcely refrain a smile when she heard Mrs. Brandon boast how intimate they had been with him, and at the very clear hints she gave of the admiration he

had bestowed upon her daughter Agnes ; for she well knew that they were precisely a family which Sir Charles would most sedulously avoid, for such completely worldly people, with greater manœuvring capabilities, were seldom to be met with, and he hated such with the utmost cordiality. Adeline soon abridged Mrs. Brandon's expectations about Sir Charles, by letting her understand that he was a particular friend of hers, and consequently, as Mrs. Brandon was fully aware upon what very slight grounds her own boasted acquaintance stood, she thought it better to drop the subject. They all agreed how much more pleasant their mutual society had rendered their transit, but the fair Florence would have been far better satisfied to have been able to have kept Murray more uninterruptedly with her, and resented the conversation he had sustained with Marion.

However, when they reached the English shore, they parted most amicably ; for Murray discovered he could not do less than offer his

services and escort to Mrs. Brandon and her daughters, as they had no cavalier ; he therefore took leave of the Vernons, and accompanied his party towards their destination.

Hope was beaming brightly in Marion's heart, when she found herself near London ; for her path seemed clearer, and the mists of sorrow were evaporating beneath the light and radiance of the star of love.

CHAPTER XV.

Yet press on !

For that shall make you mighty among men,
And from the eyrie of your eagle thoughts
Ye shall look down on monarchs. Oh, press on !
For the high ones and the powerful shall come
To do you reverence, and the beautiful
Will know the purer language of your brow,
And read it like a talisman of love !

* * * *

Press on ! for in the grave there is no work
And no device. Press on ! while yet ye may.

N. P. WILLIS.

ON Marion's reaching her home, she heard
that it had appeared in the day's paper that

Stanley was at Rivington, in the character of a candidate for representing it in Parliament. She had heard nothing of such an intention, and therefore this was a great surprise to her. In fact, the whole affair had been perfectly unexpected to Arthur, and he had had no time to write to her. Almost directly after his return from Paris, he had been informed of the death of the member for Rivington; and when he remembered how his father had always looked forward to his representing that town, he could not help sighing, when he reflected that the change in his position seemed to have quite dissolved his connection with his former home.

However, to his great surprise, he received a letter from the principal lawyer of Rivington, saying that he was sure, that if he would come forward at once, he would be returned unanimously; for the Stanley family had always been popular, and Arthur's generous conduct in the affair of the bank had won

him many warm friends, for, by his having placed such a large sum in the directors' hands, many families had received justice, and had been preserved from unspeakable distress.

Stanley's heart beat proudly when he received this summons, but he knew he could not afford to meet any electioneering expenses, and he therefore wrote to express his gratitude for the electors' preference, but stating that his income was not sufficiently large to defray the expense he would be likely to incur, and that on that ground he must decline to come forward, notwithstanding the pride and pleasure he should have felt in being the representative of a place where he had been known all his life, and with which he had always had agreeable relations.

It was a straight-forward, manly letter, and was soon shown to the principal inhabitants of the town; and so earnest was the wish for

Stanley to come forward, that Mr. Bullar, the lawyer, wrote again to say, that so unanimous was the feeling in his favour, that he need not fear any other candidate opposing his claims ; and that, therefore, the expenses would be so trifling, that they need not be any obstacle to the wishes of the borough.

After this second intimation, Stanley no longer scrupled to acquiesce in the requisition for his coming forward ; he therefore returned a favourable answer, and promised to be in Rivington as soon as possible.

When he reached there, he found the whole place in a state of excitement ; for the gentleman who had bought Langston, had shown some disposition of becoming a candidate. This circumstance added fresh interest to Stanley's cause, and gave him an impetus to pursue his object. His committee was soon formed, and a short manly address quickly appeared in his name, which seemed generally

to meet the views of the electors. However, the other party still tried their chance, and a violent appeal to the "unbiassed, unbought, and liberal men of Rivington," rapidly followed Stanley's address. Placards were to be seen in every direction, insisting on the equal rights of man, warning the electors against the influence of aristocrats and the old land-owners, and recommending the superior claims of the "People's Friend," as Mr. Jenkins, the present owner of Langston, styled himself. Nor did he omit a little personal abuse, nor allusions to the family affairs of his opponent. He shrank from no means, however disreputable, to injure Stanley's cause.

However, Mr. Bullar, who was the chief supporter and manager of Stanley's party, was a man of great moderation and judgment. He knew that these ultra-Liberal views were quite against the principles of the majority of his townsmen, and therefore contented

himself with putting forward Stanley's views in a far calmer and more gentlemanly way ; and as Arthur himself was most averse to anything like personal attacks, Mr. Jenkins met with no return to his vulgar abuse ; and this circumstance alone placed Stanley in a far higher position.

When the day came for the naming the candidates, Stanley was first proposed, and the applause was too universal to leave much doubt as to the result of the show of hands, which was indeed almost entirely in his favour, and his eloquent speech carried the day. He spoke of the ties which had always connected his family with Rivington, and added, that all around him knew the circumstances by which they had been severed. Loud cheers interrupted Stanley, for the facts of his conduct were appreciated ; and when he concluded his address, no one could doubt the issue of the following day.

Contrary to all expectations, Mr. Jenkins announced his intention of going to the poll; and all that night his agents were busily employed in promoting his interests; but the very violent code of political opinions which he had promulgated that day, prevented any of the respectable inhabitants promising him their votes, even although in some points they might have differed from Stanley.

On the all-important day of the election, a clear spring sun shone brightly on the bustling town of Rivington, and gave due effect to the banners and processions which were forming in different streets. Stanley and his friends were early on the ground, and his colours of blue and orange seemed to predominate largely over the flaming red of the opposite party; all the windows which could at all command a view of the proceedings were filled with gay groups of ladies, many of whom had come in from the neighbourhood, to take part in the excitement of the day.

They all wore scarfs or ribbons of the Stanley colours, and numerous were the salutations and waving of handkerchiefs which greeted him as he passed through the streets to the scene of action. Many of his old tenants were present, and loud cheers and hurrahs for the young Squire were raised, for their new landlord, Mr. Jenkins was a hard and exacting man, and often caused them to regret the loss of the Stanley rule, under which they had all lived so happily. This circumstance gave additional excitement to the anticipation of the approaching struggle.

Mr. Jenkins was accompanied to the hustings by but a small party, and the wearers of the red cockade were of the lowest and most ruffianly description. After a few words from each of the rival candidates, the important business of voting commenced; but it was soon evident that it was a complete farce for Mr. Jenkins to have come to the poll, for at the conclusion of the day, his numbers were

a mere fraction compared to Stanley's, who was then declared duly elected.

His spirited speech, thanking his constituents for the honour they had done him, was received with the warmest applause, and he left the hustings amid deafening shouts and renewed homage from his fair friends. He much wished to escape the ceremony of being chaired, as he really was anxious to return to town; but Mr. Bullar represented that it would be a great disappointment to the town if he omitted it, therefore he was compelled to remain another day, and as the post was already gone out, he had not the gratification of writing to tell Marion of his triumph.

He presided at a dinner given to his friends that night at the principal hotel, and delighted them all with the interest he took in the affairs of the day; and all complimented him upon the speech he had made on the hustings. Mr. Jenkins had experienced a most signal defeat, and had slunk out of the town, and returned

to Langston as quietly as possible. He did not venture to approach Rivington the day of the charring, as he was well aware that there is much excitement always abroad on such occasions, and that those who are obnoxious to the populace, do not always meet with the most courteous treatment. However, Stanley's charring passed off without anything disagreeable or worthy of record, excepting the extravagant demonstrations of delight and applause which the English mob shower upon their hero of the hour. Many were the invitations and offers of civility and attention which Stanley received from the neighbouring gentry, but he declined them all, and as soon as it was possible he left the scene of his late triumph, and started for town.

He found a few lines of congratulation on his table from Marion, who had seen the issue of the election in the paper, and telling him of the decreased opposition her parents made to her engagement. She added that they were

going to a small party in the evening at the Brandons, where she was indulging in the hope of meeting him. Stanley turned over his letters, and found a tiny envelope, all scented and glazed, which he soon recognized as one of the Brandons' *billets d'invitation*. He had no time to reply to it, but knowing them well enough to be sure of a cordial welcome, as he was just returned from a successful election, he determined to avail himself of the summons; and with his heart beating rapidly at the thought of again meeting Marion without the fear of subjecting her to reproofs or annoyance, he made his toilette, and then went to dine at the club.

He was soon surrounded by friends and acquaintance, all anxious to offer their congratulations, and eager to hear all the particulars of his election, which was quite an unexpected thing. He gave an animated and witty account of the requirements of his constituents, and of all that had passed during the excitement of the

affair. Quite a party of men dined together, and would have celebrated Stanley's success by a greater devotion than usual to the wine, but one or two of the more considerate, seeing by the style of his dress that he had not contemplated spending his evening among them, proposed fixing a dinner next week, and seizing an opportunity of escaping from the knot of men, Stanley left the club, and pursued his way towards the Brandons' house.

He had attained one great point in his objects in life—one important step towards the fulfilment of his ambition and his hopes—and this change in his position was so completely unexpected too, which added to the satisfaction it gave him. A short week before, and to be a Member of Parliament had seemed a far-off star of brightness, towards which he must journey by slow and painful steps; and now he actually possessed it—it was in his grasp—and while visions of other aims were rising before him, he

almost disregarded this last acquisition, for when it was gained it had already fulfilled the principal part of its gratifications to Stanley. To struggle onwards and upwards was the all-powerful impulse of his nature, and as his foot touched each successive step on the ascending ladder, that very step lost its significance, and the pleasure of possessing was far inferior to the excitement of conquering. And so it must ever be with ardent and energetic spirits—they must be advancing—anything like stagnation in the moral world is as unnatural and fatal as it is in the material world, where development and progress are imperative, where even decay evolves re-construction, and life is springing up from the cold grasp of death. Nothing stationary can satisfy a mind like Stanley's, and so he felt it: he knew he was not formed for a tranquil life of inaction, he never made cessation from labour the reward of his struggles. He knew toil and battle-strife is man's appointed destiny as long as life is his, and he was grateful

for the moral and intellectual power which had been granted him to fulfil his appointed vocation.

He felt as if all difficulties, all weariness were welcome, if the inmost sanctuary of his heart could be illumined by the tenderness of such love as Marion's, as if that would preserve him from the hardening influences of the world, in which lay his appointed path, and kindle his higher and loftier feelings towards the highest good, and the purest beautiful.

CHAPTER XVI.

It is not that thy face is fair,
 Tho' fair it is, and young,
But that the mind and heart have there
 Their own enchantment flung ;
And beauty, the most beautiful,
Without that inward life were dull ;
 Without the soft shades hung
By pensive thoughts—by moral grace,
That give the spirit to the face.

L. E. LANDON.

WHEN Stanley appeared in the Brandons' drawing-room he was most cordially received

by all, and was obliged to listen to compliments and congratulations from people to whom he was utterly indifferent, which bored him not a little, as he was longing to see the smile of heartfelt delight on Marion's lip, and to read her sympathy in her eyes; for he felt that without this, his success would lose the brightest drop in its chalice. However, before he could reach the sofa where she was sitting by Murray, he was accosted by Mrs. Harcourt, who offered her hand with great cordiality, and endeavoured to converse as if there had been no interruption to their intercourse; but skilled though she might be in worldly address, there was an indefinable something of sarcasm in the perfectly gentlemanly manner with which Stanley met her, that convinced her that he was not to be deceived as to the cause of the change in her conduct.

He turned away from the smiles and

welcomes that were surrounding him, which he knew were elicited by his flowing tide of prosperity, to seek sympathy where he had found it when misfortune and sorrow had overwhelmed him, and which had been ever true through "good report and evil report."

Marion's soft eyes were raised to his with that loving, gentle expression, which he knew rested on him alone, and as he took her hand, he felt that on her his true happiness depended. Murray had vacated his seat, and Stanley availed himself of his consideration by occupying it. Neither Marion or Stanley were much in the mood for dancing; however, as they were at a party, they were compelled to comply with custom and stand up, for like all humanity, they were environed by circumstances, and, to a certain extent, dependant upon them. They both knew that they could not indulge in the pleasure of sitting quietly together without exciting re-

marks, and therefore, they were soon whirling round in the magic circle of the valse.

How very much had happened to them since they had last been threading its giddy mazes together; sorrow had come to them with the deepest tones it can pour into mortal ear. Death, loss of fortune, disappointment, a long separation; they had experienced all of these—they had passed through the ordeal of suffering, and it had not left them without impressing its significance upon their souls. For ennobling, strengthening, and purifying, are the effects of a sorrow which is sanctified by love!

Stanley was ready to meet the world's realities and struggles with a deeper sense of responsibility, and with better regulated powers and energies to combat them; and Marion had proved that her theory of constancy and endurance was more than a dream, and she felt how much stronger was her affection

for Stanley now that they had struggled and conquered for each other, than if they had merely been borne through life upon the unresisting, rose-tinted wings of joy and prosperity.

Thoughts something like these were floating through their minds during that valse, and called a tear of gratitude and happiness into Marion's eyes as she met Stanley's deep glance. Her long, fair curls almost touched his cheek as he bent to whisper a few words of love and tenderness, before he released her from his arm.

Murray claimed Marion's hand soon after, and Stanley stood near, at his old station in the folding-doors, watching as she gracefully moved in the quadrille. He was musing upon all his intercourse with her, upon the first time he had ever seen her, which was in that very room, and then through their subsequent acquaintance. He remembered his vain

struggles against her influence, and the trembling fear he had entertained of her capabilities of realising the happiness he had dreamed of; he thought of the inexpressible joy he had experienced in receiving her confessions of affection, and of the blissful days which had succeeded it; and then came the memory of the misery, when he had resolved to resign her, and of the flood of delight which she had poured upon him by adhering to him. All the desolation of their separation recurred to him, but he soon forgot that in the pleasure which he now enjoyed in being again with her.

As he stood leaning against the door, with his dark, lustrous eyes fixed upon the object of his thoughts, his fine, tall figure and the commanding expression of his features attracted much attention, and many were the prognostications of a brilliant career before him, which were pronounced.

All this gratified Mrs. Harcourt's ambitious and worldly views, and she endeavoured to forget herself and to make others forget the determined opposition which she had made to the engagement when Arthur's position changed.

Stanley discerned many indications that evening, of a very perfect understanding having been established between Murray and Florence Brandon, and he could not repress a smile at the realization of the suspicions he had had at a very early stage in the affair. He did not believe that Murray felt a very deep attachment, but when he remembered his numerous flirtations, he owned that anything like very strong feelings were not to be expected from him; and as the young lady was no favourite of his, he considered that she did not merit the earnest devotions of a man's heart.

After Stanley had wrapped Marion's cloak round her, and had handed her and Mrs.

Harcourt to their carriage, and had received an express wish from the latter of seeing him in their house, he returned to the drawing-room to seek Murray, that they might walk towards the Temple together. However, he found him and the fair Florence engaged in an almost interminable valse; and, as all mortal phases do at last come to an end, Murray resigned his partner, and accompanied Stanley in his walk.

“ Well, Murray,” began Stanley, “ do you remember my prophesying that it would not be long before you yielded to the fascinations of Miss Florence? I do not think you can deny the truth of my penetration.”

“ My dear fellow, what was I to do? I met her everywhere: she is very chatty and agreeable, and is certainly pretty. I must marry before I sail for India, and I knew there would not be much difficulty in persuading her to accept me. She has met me so very

obligingly, that I knew two words any day would settle the thing."

"And have you not yet summoned courage to say these magic words? You have not much time to spare, for you will have to sail very shortly."

"Yes, I arranged it all to-night. I was determined to leave it as late as I could, for I hate the showing off that seems to be the fashionable ordeal for *les fiancés* to undergo, and have therefore abridged it as much as possible; for we must be married in less than a month, and therefore I shall not be made a spectacle of very long!"

"How you do talk, Murray! one would think you were speaking of an execution. Do you mean to say you are going to marry this girl without caring for her?"

"I don't pretend to be violently in love; but I dare say we shall get on comfortably enough together. You know very well how I have

misspent my life, how completely I have mistaken its aims and objects, for I made enjoyment and happiness the pole-stars to my course, instead of taking the stern path of right, regardless whether it led to joy or sorrow, and of acknowledging that mortality cannot claim happiness as a *right*, but ought to hail it as a privilege."

"But why commit that crowning piece of folly and wrong, that of marrying a woman you do not love? that is not the way to mend matters."

"I cannot expect to meet with real, priceless love, when I have trifled with it and scorned it so often. No, Stanley, I know I cannot hope to gain such sympathy and affection as you have secured. You know better than I do how carelessly I have lived, how regardless I have been of aught but the passing moment. You and I have pursued life through different courses, and I cannot expect to be on an

equality with you now. You can never know how I have envied your energy and perseverance, your strong sense of right, and your determination in adhering to it. Would that my life had been different; but the seeds are sown now, and will bring forth their fruit in the harvest-field of time. On your own principle of the inevitable consequences of actions, to what can I look forward but disappointment and regret?"

"True; but though the past is irrevocable, you have still the future, and opportunities for doing much: anything is better than hopeless, actionless despair. Only hesitate before you take another unalterable step — of marriage, which of all things must most materially affect a man's destiny on earth and through eternity."

"I cannot hesitate now — it is too late; besides, I believe Florence is better than I had a right to have hoped for, she is affectionate

and sincere, and with that one may do much. I must find my happiness in far different realities than what I once pictured to myself; and of one thing I am determined, that she shall never know to what a heartless, reckless nature she has bound herself; for although I cannot give her the truest and most genuine feelings of the heart, she shall never have reason to reproach me for neglect."

"I hope and believe, my dear Murray, that you will find more satisfaction in your future than you seem to anticipate; you have revelled too much in fanciful dreams of happiness, and you will always find life's realities are less glowing than these. When you return to England again, you will tell me I was right in predicting you would find existence very bearable, even when the flush and excitement of youth and worldly pleasure have subsided."

"It may be so. I do not know what I shall do in India without you, Stanley; since our

boyish days we have been so accustomed to meet almost daily, that when I want advice and society I shall feel perfectly lost when I know that I cannot go to you."

"Yes, that is the worst part of this appointment ; it is hard to break up old friendships and associations, but although India 'stands where it did,' the means of communication are so very much augmented and facilitated, that we can still hear frequently from each other, and if they make the transit much more rapid, you must not be petrified if I and Marion pay you a visit some long vacation."

"How delighted I should be to welcome you to my new home ! Well, more improbable things than that have happened."

"When is your wedding to take place ? very soon it must be. I suppose it will be a gay affair ?"

"I am afraid so, for when Warrenne married Lucy, they had a great fuss, and I dare say

they would not think they were doing their duty by Florence, if her wedding were less dashing than her sister's. I would give anything to have the matter managed quietly, but I cannot suggest it: after all, it will not last long; that is one's only comfort in such predicaments. Of course you will do all that is necessary for me on the interesting occasion, as the newspapers term it, in the way of bridegroom's man, Stanley?"

"Certainly, if you wish it; it was droll enough I acted in the same capacity to Vernon. Well, I hope Miss Brandon will make you a steadier wife than Adeline is; I am afraid they will not go on very happily for long, unless Vernon is a little more careful. One thing in their favour is, that they are both good-tempered, and that smooths a great many difficulties; but it will not compensate for everything."

"Oh, I think they are a very average

couple ! Vernon is a capital fellow, and when he has had a little more experience, I expect they will get on very well. It is curious that I should claim your assistance at my wedding, Stanley, when I had promised mine to you long ago. How differently everything has turned out to what we used to anticipate ! and even now, how little will our hopes be realized ! Florence will ask Miss Harcourt to officiate as one of her bridesmaids, I know.”

“ I am sure Marion will acquiesce willingly, although I believe she is not very partial to weddings.”

“ I shall be anxious to hear of your marriage, Arthur ; but now you are in Parliament, I suppose you must postpone it until the end of the session ; next autumn I shall expect to have full particulars of it.”

“ I hope I shall be able to give them ; but it is too happy a prospect for me to anticipate without many fears of disappointment, especially

after all the misery that intervened last summer, when I was building such fairy castles of happiness with Marion."

"Never think of that; you will succeed, I am sure of it. Now I must leave you; here are my rooms; I have never felt at home since I left the good old Temple. Good-night!"

CHAPTER XVII.

I saw thee wedded—thou didst go
Within the sacred aisle,
Thy young cheek in a blushing glow,
Betwixt a tear and smile.

ETONIAN.

Ah! let us learn from yon skies, over which the old Greek poetry believed brooded the wings of primeval and serenest love, what earthly love should be: a thing pure as light, and peaceful as immortality, watching over the stormy world that it will survive, and high above the clouds and vapours that roll below.

BULWER.

MURRAY was married amid all the pomp and display which he disliked; a train of

bridemaids, a string of carriages, and a sumptuous *déjeûner*, and he and his bride had sailed for India. We will not inquire too narrowly into their future ; if Murray's happiness was not so complete as his vivid imagination had dreamed of in earlier days, he had nothing very irksome to annoy him ; and when two or three fair children enlivened his Indian home, he threw off a shade of melancholy and apathy which was succeeding the love of excitement which had characterized his early manhood.

Quickly passed away the summer after Stanley's election, for he was with Marion as much as circumstances would permit, and she rejoiced in hearing of his increasing reputation and success. He had become an orator, and the senate listened breathlessly for the burning words of eloquence which issued from his lips, and nations looked up with reverence to his opinions.

His maiden speech had been a triumph: he had heard the words, "Splendid," "Eloquent," "Masterly," as he passed through the lobby of the House, where he was soon surrounded by groups of friends all eager to compliment him, and all proud to be seen with one who was on the high road to distinction. His professional prospects were most encouraging, and in a short time he was in a position to receive some of the honours of the law from his party: he had conquered every obstacle, and although he had not yet touched the pinnacle of his ambition, it was no shadowy imagination that in the future he might do so. He now scarcely regretted the loss of his fortune, although the memory of Langston was still very dear, and the knowledge that a stranger dwelt there had not lost any of its bitterness; but he was conscious that had not his energies been aroused by a stern necessity, and his soul strengthened and disciplined by the harsh ordeal of sorrow,

that he would have been in a far lower grade of being, for he would not have been aware of his own capabilities and powers, nor estimated aright his responsibilities and requirements. For some natures are like the precious metals, which demand the hottest furnace to bring them to perfection ; and when the trials and temptations of life are met and conquered as Stanley had done, the soul which has passed through the tempests is as far superior to the one which has disregarded their significance, as the noble forest oak surpasses the waving water-rush.

Mr. and Mrs. Harcourt no longer offered any opposition to the rising statesman, who was *fêted* and courted by the noblest and highest in the land ; and all the hours he could steal from his multifarious occupations were spent in Marion's society, which seemed dearer than ever to him, now that the hollow voice of the world's approbation again sounded in

his ear, when its rewards and its honours were as nothing compared to the priceless treasure of her pure and holy love.

The session was prolonged until late in the season, and anxiously was Stanley anticipating its close, for then he was to call Marion his bride. How he fretted and chafed at the parliamentary bonds which he could not shake off, finding, as many before have done, that ambition's requisitions are hard to meet, and often demand the sacrifice of the sweet influence of affection. But Marion's gentle representations urged him to patience, and the interest she manifested in his labours and pursuits added fresh interest to them; she was never wearied of listening to his political discussions, and showed such power of entering into his views, that he appreciated her more highly every day. Unlike many women, she was not hurt or annoyed when he seemed thoughtful or pre-occupied in her society; she did not ex-

pect him to forget everything for her, or to banish all thoughts but those of love and pleasure.

But by endeavouring to enter into his ideas, and to make herself worthy of his confidence, she prepared herself to become his companion ; and he understood her generous, unselfish conduct, and in his unrestrained moments, he made her feel the depth and unchanged ardour of his affection. And although such moods were somewhat rare, she never wronged him by tormenting him with complaints of neglect or indifference ; she believed in his truth, and loved him with all the energy of her soul, and considered one of his earnest glances quite sufficient to compensate for all the devotion she could give him.

Such is what true, real affection should be, unsullied by doubts, unchilled by any adverse appearances, still the same through all moods, through all obstacles ; and such will have its

reward, even in the holy peace it pours into the heart which is illuminated by it.

At length the last night of the session arrived ; and as Stanley took leave of Marion after dinner to return to the House, he whispered :

“After to-day, love, I shall be wholly yours. I cannot tell you how I long for peace and quiet, after all the toil and excitement I have undergone. I want you, dearest, to talk to me of better, purer things. A few more days, and you will be mine, my own, for life, and for eternity.”

A tender, confiding glance was all Marion could give as an answer to these whispered words ; and with its sweet influence penetrating his heart, he joined another member, who was waiting for him in his brougham. The next day, Majesty in silvery tones prorogued the Parliament, and liberated many weary beings from their bondage, and none rejoiced in their

freedom with such sincerity as Stanley did. How inexpressibly dear to him were those few days before he could call Marion his own ! There was such a gentle thoughtfulness on her brow, and such sweetness in her smile, such trusting affection in every look, that he could scarcely venture to hope that time could add one charm to her. And yet he longed to have her exclusively his own, for until he had, there was always a lurking dread of something snatching her from him haunting his mind.

I went to their wedding ; they both would have it so. I saw her pass down the stairs for the last time, as the trembling, unclaimed maiden, with her long, snowy drapery drooping like a pure cloud around her, her pale, golden curls shining beneath the misty folds of the lace veil. I saw her stand in the dim, sacred light of the church before the altar, with the adored one of her soul. I heard their low,

earnest voices plighting their vows until death. I saw the expression of almost sublime devotion and heavenly love on her countenance, and knew that he would never find that love grow cold ; and then I saw her pass down the aisle as the cherished bride, her white-gloved hand resting on her husband's strong arm, and clasped close to his heart, which was too full for words. I saw them enter their carriage, and disappear from my sight ; and I met them no more that day, as they refused to appear at the breakfast, for too many serious thoughts of what they had undertaken were agitating them both for them to wish to meet a careless party.

Therefore, when we had dispersed, the carriage drove up, and Stanley handed Marion in ; and then they started for the sweet Scotch Highlands, their hearts beating with high hopes and deepest tenderness for each other.

Yes ! after all their trials, and all their sor-

rows, life is still bright with its best gifts ; and although they knew that grief and disappointment, toil and trouble, could not be erased from their destiny ; that while they were yet on earth they must see clouds and night, as well as sunshine and day, yet they were together, and together they could bear all things ; with sympathy to console, and affection to soothe, nothing could come which might not be conquered and borne.

Go on, then, for ye are linked together in the holiest of all ties—husband and wife—as it is meet. Ye have not entered lightly upon your new relations, your love has been purified by sorrow, and it has conquered it, as the sun's power dispels the vapours of earth ; nothing shall overcome it now ; the world shall sink before its holy influence, death will lose its sting, and an endless eternity shall make you happy in each other.

Such were some of my reflections when I

joined Mr. and Mrs. Colston at dinner on Marion's wedding-day. They had been present at the morning ceremony, and we had assembled to talk over all that had passed.

It was at their house I had first seen Marion, and had first began to take an interest in her destiny, and to form speculations about it; and little had I dreamed of all that fair young being had to suffer, when I had watched her on our first introduction; but even my brightest hopes for her happiness could not have been more truly realized, than by consigning her to the love and devotion of such a man as Arthur Stanley.

We drank the health of the bride and bridegroom, and wished them every good that can be showered on mortals; and we old people began to think our own probation must soon draw to its close, when we saw all our young friends growing up, and entering upon life's arduous duties. But the fruit hangs long after it has

attained its ripeness ; decay, though sure, is slow ; though the sun be sunk in the western sky, it still leaves its radiance on the clouds, and I have outlived many who seemed as if they would have seen the old man go to his last home.

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Vernon and Adeline went on in the sunshine of life, without much reflection ; he never lost his love and admiration for his wife, who retained her beauty for many years. They never had any children, which was very fortunate, for Adeline would not have made a very tender mother, and the ties of a family would have interfered very much with her plans of enjoyment. She and her husband spent many months together on the continent, for the life there was well calculated to suit them. Altogether, theirs was a desultory existence ; and when the days

drew on, when the zest for pleasure was gone, they brought weariness and *ennui* with them, for they had pursued the golden bubble of selfish enjoyment; and at last it burst, as the waves of life grew deeper and darker, and left them in a sea of vacuity and disappointment.

* * * *

I saw Stanley and Marion again, but Mr. and Mrs. Colston never did, for they lived abroad; and when they died, they bequeathed all their property to their favourites, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. Mr. Jenkins found that the events at the election had left such disagreeable impressions, that his residence at Langston was anything but pleasant; therefore, after braving public dislike for some years, he determined to sell the estate; and as soon as this was made known, Stanley immediately entered into nego-

ciations for again acquiring possession of his paternal home, which he had resigned with such reluctance. The fortune which the Colstons had left him, enabled him to gratify himself by the purchase, and he at last found himself again master of his favourite Langston.

Sir Charles Seymour married in the course of time a delightful woman, and they lived tolerably near Langston, and became very intimate friends of the Stanleys.

I am getting very old, and do not care to leave my own fireside ; but I cannot resist sometimes visiting Langston, where my two favourites are, and sometimes I think I shall comply with their reiterated entreaties that I would really take up my abode with them, and occupy a corner in their hospitable house, until the great Destroyer summons me to my last home, when I shall learn still more certainly of the purifying and wholesome influence of sorrow, and of the heavenly power and radiance of love,

which will endure in heaven when even faith and hope have ceased to be. I shall understand more of the two facts which have ever seemed to me the great realities of life.

THE END.

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